



Research Report

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Annual Trends Among the Unsheltered in Three Los Angeles Neighborhoods

The Los Angeles Longitudinal Enumeration and
Demographic Survey (LA LEADS) 2024 Annual Report

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About This Report

Since fall 2021, RAND has conducted ongoing enumerations and surveys of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in three neighborhoods in Los Angeles, California: Hollywood, Skid Row, and Venice. These data were obtained to provide policymakers with a deeper understanding of trends in the number of, demographics of, and services being provided to unsheltered people in areas known to be epicenters of the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles. In this report, we describe findings from the 2024 enumeration and survey efforts and put them in context with both our own past results and data from other regional sources. This information is relevant to government and nongovernmental entities interested in addressing unsheltered homelessness in Los Angeles.

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Summary

The most recent full year of results from the ongoing Los Angeles Longitudinal Enumeration and Demographic Survey (LA LEADS) study, a unique longitudinal study combining bimonthly enumerations and annual surveys of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in three neighborhoods in Los Angeles, California—Hollywood, Skid Row, and Venice—revealed a meaningfully different picture of unsheltered homelessness in 2024 compared with past years. The number of unsheltered people declined, likely driven by increased throughput to interim and permanent housing assets. However, multiple measures of acuity among people remaining on the street appear worse, suggesting that extending the past year’s progress may require additional strategies.

Our enumerations show that the number of people living on the streets in the LA LEADS study area dropped significantly in 2024 for the first time since the project began in 2021. Unsheltered homelessness across these three areas fell by more than 15 percent (500 people) in total. In the race to bring everyone indoors, this is an encouraging finding relative to two prior years of flat or growing unsheltered populations. However, a closer examination reveals that the relationship between this progress and specific city or regional policies remains unclear.

Geographically, a nearly 700-person decrease in the combined unsheltered populations of Hollywood (a 49-percent decline) and Venice (a 22-percent decline) was offset by a 170-person increase in Skid Row (9 percent). In Skid Row, a decrease in the average age of unsheltered residents, a decline in reported time on the streets, and an increase in reporting eviction as a cause of current homelessness suggest that there has been significant turnover in the unsheltered population but that, on net, outflows remained lower than inflows over the past year.

Demographically, *rough sleeping* (i.e., living literally unsheltered without a tent, makeshift shelter, or vehicle) **showed no significant decline in any of the three LA LEADS neighborhoods. This most vulnerable form of unsheltered homelessness is also the most common in our study area, representing about 40 percent of the total unsheltered population that we enumerated as of December 2024.** Of the remaining tent encampments in our combined study area, 80 percent are in Skid Row.

There is good reason to believe that some of these trends may be linked with at least two high-profile city policies—Inside Safe encampment resolutions (which move people from targeted encampments to hotels and motels for temporary housing and services) and the enforcement of the Los Angeles Municipal Code’s (LAMC’s) 41.18 anticamping ordinance (which provides for the relocation or removal of persons dwelling in specified public areas). But the strength of such a connection is difficult to pin down. Record numbers of Inside Safe encampment resolutions are consistent with Hollywood’s 2024 decline, but Venice saw virtually no engagements related to that initiative. Meanwhile, the equivalent of 12 percent of Skid Row’s unsheltered population was cited for

LAMC 41.18 violations in 2024, yet that neighborhood’s unsheltered homeless population grew.¹ Thus, crediting changes in unsheltered homelessness to specific programs—or understanding the relationship of those changes to new inflows of people—requires more study.

Regardless of its cause, the shift away from tent-dwelling toward rough sleeping presents clinical, tactical, and strategic challenges that the homelessness services system must address if 2024’s progress is to continue. Clinically, already strained service providers may become further challenged as their average client becomes more vulnerable from the unique tolls of sleeping rough. Tactically, street outreach teams will likely become less efficient as their average client becomes more mobile and thus harder to maintain contact with. Strategically, encampment-based housing initiatives will become less effective as the number of encampments declines. Indeed, evidence for all of these shifts is already emerging in our demographic surveys.

We expanded our demographic survey effort in 2024 to more than double the number of respondents compared with 2023, allowing us to obtain more-reliable data on the unsheltered populations of Hollywood, Skid Row, and Venice. Notable findings from this year include the following:

- Respondents reported staying in the same location for shorter amounts of time relative to past years. This finding is consistent with the removal of *shelter in place* orders and increases in sanitation and other encampment resolution efforts—most common in Hollywood—that either move unsheltered people indoors or periodically displace them, leaving a more transient, mobile, and dynamic population.
- Hollywood’s population changed dramatically in 2024: There were fewer Black or African American unsheltered residents, and respondents were more likely to report receiving benefits, income, or both. Health status reports also worsened compared with previous years in this neighborhood, and respondents were more likely to report having been in jail and less likely to report having received safe sex or harm reduction resources, documentation assistance, and housing assessment assistance than in 2023.
- Venice’s population continues to report slightly higher education levels, higher rates of receipt of Social Security and disability benefits, and higher income. Respondents in Venice are also more likely to be employed than those in the other LA LEADS neighborhoods. Venice respondents also had the highest rates of currently having a cell phone and a driver’s license. Receipt of Social Security benefits, overall income, and reports of receiving medical services since being on the streets increased relative to 2023.
- The fraction of respondents who reported that they were sleeping rough when they were surveyed more than doubled in both Hollywood and Venice compared with past years.
- Relative to the populations in other neighborhoods surveyed, the unsheltered population in Skid Row continues to skew older, female, and Black. This population is also less likely to be working and more likely to report simultaneously having mental health, physical health, and substance use disorders. Respondents in Skid Row were more likely to report staying in the same location for three years or longer and less likely to report being forced to move by law

¹ LAMC 41.18-related citations in Venice amount to only about 20 percent of the decline that we observe.

enforcement or housed residents than respondents from the other two surveyed neighborhoods.

- Twenty-six percent of survey respondents reported having prior foster care experience.
- People ages 62 and older and those earning less than \$99 per month were significantly less likely to be searching for housing than younger people or those with higher incomes.
- While interest in becoming housed remained high across respondents from the three neighborhoods (91 percent), the number reporting being on a waitlist was still relatively low (38 percent). Respondents from Venice were simultaneously least likely to report ever being offered housing or shelter (51 percent) but most likely to accept most forms of it when an offer was made. Across all three neighborhoods, the reported rate of receiving offers of supportive housing was low (13 percent). Group shelter offers were higher at 39 percent, and had a reported acceptance rate of less than 50 percent.
- The three highest-rated housing-related needs that respondents reported were storage of possessions (54 percent); being allowed to stay with a partner, child, pet, or roommate (40 percent); and being allowed to stay in a particular neighborhood (39 percent).

On balance, our survey results point to either no change or a decline in multiple markers of well-being. While most of the population continues to express interest in becoming housed, the level of housing placement assistance remains low. Combined with evidence from our enumerations, these results suggest that additional policies will be needed to extend 2024's success. We hope the data and analyses presented here will help policymakers, service providers, and the broader community in the effort to create such policies.

Recommendations

Our findings support two overarching recommendations:

1. **Policymakers should continue to prioritize and streamline the creation of permanent housing assets.** In Los Angeles County, 26 percent more people entered permanent housing in fiscal year 2023–2024 compared with the previous fiscal year (County of Los Angeles, 2025). This enhanced throughput—enabled in part by the opening of new bond-funded permanent supportive housing units, Proposition HHH (e.g., Los Angeles Housing Department, undated)—freed up interim housing beds for unsheltered residents. Continuing to fund and build these assets with urgency is critical to ensuring Los Angeles's substantial remaining unsheltered population has the quickest route indoors.
2. **Outreach and engagement strategies should be tailored to address rough sleepers specifically.** Multidisciplinary outreach teams need to prioritize this group, which may require greater collaboration across geographic areas and improved communication and data-sharing. Monitoring the results of new care-coordination models, such as the MacArthur Park Care Collaborative (Newton, 2025), will be essential. Importantly, outreach should focus not just on offering shelter but on building trust and relationships. Because rough sleepers often lack the social connections that programs such as Inside Safe may rely on (Dones and Espinoza,

2024), strategies should emphasize fostering these connections, particularly with outreach staff.

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Introduction

2024 marks the third year of our ongoing enumerations and surveys of three Los Angeles (LA), California, neighborhoods with high concentrations of people living without shelter: Hollywood, Skid Row, and Venice. Despite declining by about 10 percent compared with the previous year (Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority [LAHSA], 2024), Los Angeles’s unsheltered population remained substantial in 2024: More than 29,000 individuals were estimated to be experiencing this form of homelessness.

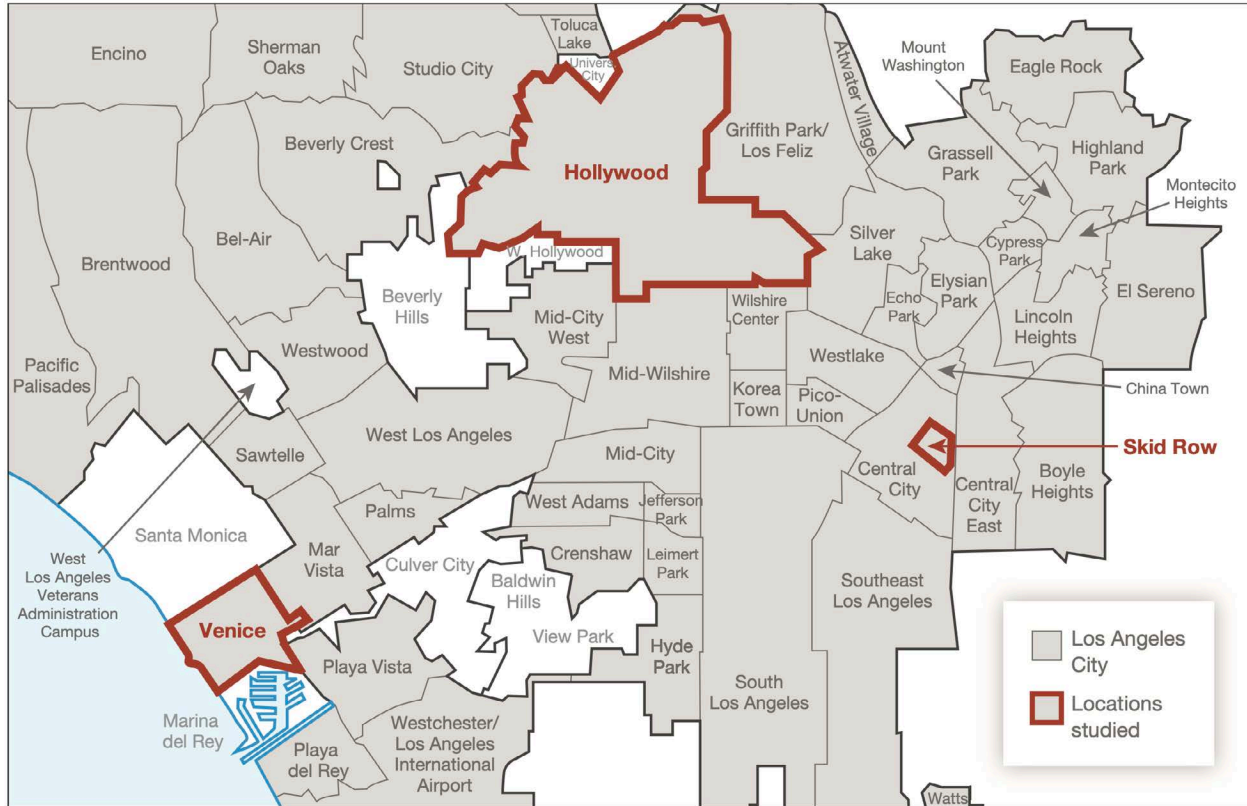
The complex dynamics of homelessness and multiple ongoing policy interventions make explaining trends in unsheltered homelessness in Los Angeles challenging. For example, our previous research has shown that increased resources and attention spent on encampment resolutions can lead to temporary neighborhood-level reductions (Abramson, 2024; Ward, Garvey, and Hunter, 2024), but populations have tended to rebound, potentially accompanied by shifts to more-vulnerable modes of living, such as *sleeping rough* (i.e., living literally unsheltered without a tent or vehicle). Because multiple interventions can happen over the course of a year, understanding both the needs of unsheltered people and the effects of evolving policies requires more-frequent data collection than the annual official Point-in-Time (PIT) count.

The Los Angeles Longitudinal Enumeration and Demographic Survey (LA LEADS) provides such data. As continued efforts to address unsheltered homelessness unfold in Los Angeles, this ongoing study serves two crucial purposes: (1) tracking changes in the unsheltered population in the neighborhoods of Hollywood, Skid Row, and Venice, and (2) documenting the characteristics and experiences of unsheltered individuals in these neighborhoods. Both of these efforts use standardized methods and trained professionals, allowing for robust comparisons across time and replicability by other investigators. With these data, we hope to provide decisionmakers with actionable insights into the effectiveness of existing homelessness interventions and help inform future strategies to address unsheltered homelessness in Los Angeles.

Study Geography

As described in our previous reports (Ward, Garvey, and Hunter, 2022; Ward, Garvey, and Hunter, 2023; Ward, Garvey, and Hunter, 2024), we focus on three Los Angeles neighborhoods with large populations of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness—Hollywood, Skid Row, and Venice (Figure 1.1). The neighborhood boundaries were established using input from service providers, other stakeholders, and our own initial site assessments when LA LEADS began in fall 2021. In 2024, we extended the boundaries in Venice to include an area east of Lincoln Boulevard near Penmar Park that has historically been populated by unsheltered individuals (see Appendix A).

Figure 1.1. Map of Study Sites in the City of Los Angeles



NOTE: LA LEADS study areas are subareas of the neighborhoods indicated on this map. See Appendix A for more-detailed geographical renderings of the study areas.

Organization of This Report

In this report, we describe observations from our 2024 data and place them in context with past findings. Chapter 2 focuses on the results from our bimonthly enumerations, including a comparison between our results and those of the 2024 annual PIT count. Chapter 3 summarizes key survey results across these three neighborhoods. Chapter 4 discusses and synthesizes these findings and discusses limitations of the study. An annex to this report contains the following appendixes with critical details about the study:

- Appendix A provides detailed maps of each study area.
- Appendix B provides methodological details on the study.
- Appendix C provides detailed enumeration counts for each neighborhood across time.
- Appendix D provides survey results by neighborhood over time with statistical tests for these changes.
- Appendix E presents the survey results for 2024 with statistical tests for differences across neighborhoods and additional regression analyses.

- Appendix F provides additional comparisons between the LA LEADS and LAHSA PIT annual counts from 2022 and 2023.

Enumeration Results

In 2024, LA LEADS’s Hollywood and Venice study areas saw meaningful declines in unsheltered homelessness, but Skid Row did not. In this chapter, after reviewing our methodology, we discuss the most-recent data for each area and then their combined trends over the full study period.

When we are able, we comment on potential links between the trends we observe and two core Los Angeles City homelessness policies—Mayor Bass’s Inside Safe program, which moves people from tent encampments into interim housing (Mayor Karen Bass, undated), and Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) 41.18 (2021) enforcement, which provides for the removal of people and dwellings in certain public areas. While the list of potential causes for changes in the counts is obviously much longer, and the implementation of these policies depends significantly on the discretion of the local city councilmember, we find that (1) data on both programs are publicly available (Kenneth Mejia, LA City Controller, undated-b), (2) evidence on their presence and scope near the LA LEADS study areas often appears correlated with the population shifts that we observe, and (3) our demographic survey respondents affirmatively report law enforcement being the leading cause of relocations (see Chapter 3 and Table D.5 in Appendix D and Table E.4 in Appendix E in the annex). Thus, while we cannot speak formally about causality, some discussion is warranted.

Finally, we conclude by comparing official statistics from LAHSA’s 2024 PIT count with LA LEADS observations of the same areas at roughly the same time (LAHSA, 2024). PIT counts are conducted each year for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development by service providers and volunteers across Los Angeles County to obtain a census of people experiencing homelessness. While the 2022 and 2023 enumerations agree well (see Appendix F in the annex), the 2024 PIT estimates are systematically 25 to 60 percent lower than the LA LEADS values, potentially affecting the interpretation of both 2024’s PIT count and future PIT results.

Approach

In 2024, we conducted bimonthly counts for a total of six enumerations per neighborhood throughout the year.² This report extends our previous analysis, incorporating 2024 trends and presenting a more comprehensive time series of enumeration data spanning approximately 39 months for each neighborhood.

Consistent with our methodology since November 2022, counts were conducted on weekday evenings between 9:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. (Ward, Garvey, and Hunter, 2024). To minimize bias,

²This approach differed from the more-frequent counts in previous years: biweekly in Skid Row and monthly in Hollywood and Venice from September 2021–September 2022, followed by monthly counts in all three sites from October to December 2022. See Ward, Hunter, and Garvey (2023) for more details on the 2021–2022 effort.

field teams varied their starting locations and movement directions for each count. For a detailed explanation of our enumeration methodology, refer to Ward, Garvey, and Hunter (2022).

Before presenting our results, a few notes are warranted regarding our analysis. First, LA LEADS enumerators tally vehicle dwellings, tents and makeshift structures, and *rough sleepers*—i.e., persons living literally unsheltered without a vehicle or tent. The total number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness is an inference based on those counts and an estimate of the average occupancy of tent and vehicle dwellings derived from surveys of unsheltered individuals (see Table B.1 in Appendix B in the annex). Most of the statistical uncertainty comes from the weights we use to impute individuals in vehicles, tents, and makeshift shelters, not the raw counts.

As in past years (Ward, Garvey, and Hunter, 2024), we provide two population estimates that use different weighting assumptions. The first approach multiplies dwelling counts by their estimated average number of occupants and assumes that every unsheltered person observed outside a dwelling is, in fact, a rough sleeper. This *full multiplier* approach likely results in some double-counting because it implicitly assumes that everyone affiliated with these shelters is inside them when they are counted and that anyone counted as an individual is unassociated with any shelter. To account for this possibility, we also plot results using a *hybrid weight* set that reduces the number of individuals counted as rough sleepers by the fraction of survey respondents who say they sleep in a tent or vehicle (50 to 70 percent; see Table B.2 in Appendix B in the annex). This correction may result in an underestimate of the true population because it assumes that *none* of these people are in their dwellings when they are counted. Hence, the true unsheltered population likely lies between these two estimates.

While we plot both estimates where appropriate, all in-text statistics refer to the full multiplier inferences because this approach mirrors the methodology of the annual PIT count conducted by LAHSA. Trends are similar using either approach, but the absolute differences are significant. Across the 39-month baseline, our full multiplier estimates are 27 percent (205 people), 19 percent (133 people), and 35 percent (480 people) higher than our hybrid estimates in Hollywood, Venice, and Skid Row, respectively. Readers may keep these average gaps in mind as they interpret our results. Tables C.1–C.4 in Appendix C list results using both of these adjustments.

We characterize Inside Safe encampment resolutions using data from the LA City Administrator’s Office (CAO) (Szabo, 2025). Because such activity can reduce or increase the unsheltered population in a given area—either by placing people in interim housing or causing them to relocate into another area—we take an inclusive view toward quantifying it. In the cases of Venice and Skid Row, we examine all Inside Safe actions in the relevant city council districts (11 and 14, respectively). Most of these took place near but not actually inside the LA LEADS study areas. In the case of Hollywood—which intersects three council districts (4, 5, and 13) and two cities (Los Angeles and West Hollywood)—we select specific actions at intersections abutting or inside the study area for these enumerations.

We characterize LAMC 41.18 anticamping enforcement using data from the LA City Controller (Kenneth Mejia, LA City Controller, undated-a) and tally parking citations using data from the LA City Department of Transportation (City of Los Angeles, undated). In these cases, we consider only those citations whose geotag is inside the LA LEADS study area. We acknowledge that enforcement activities extend beyond citations and that other city ordinances can affect unsheltered people beyond those we can easily study. For example, LAMC 41.18 anticamping enforcement escalates to citations

following attempts to voluntarily relocate unsheltered individuals from designated exclusion zones. Successful relocations could thus alter the number of people residing in our enumeration zones directly—or indirectly, by creating a disincentive to dwell inside these areas—without appearing in the citation database. Additionally, individuals may move to a new location simply because of the attention related to these attempts at offering relocation options. LAMC 56.11 (2016) enforcement—which governs the storage of private property in the public right of way—could similarly affect our enumerations, although to our knowledge, there is no database by which to characterize it. The reader may keep these provisions in mind when considering the link between observed trends and city policies.

Finally, unless stated otherwise, all estimates discussed are based on linear regression trends estimated using the count or population time-series data. This approach reduces the impact of random counting errors and leverages all of the information obtained over the relevant time baseline. When discussing trends in the annual PIT count, LAHSA relies on a direct comparison of single values. We include analogous point-wise measures in Table C.5 in Appendix C to support direct comparisons with that dataset, but we caution that these comparisons may be more prone to idiosyncratic error than regression-derived estimates.

Neighborhood-Level Trends

Hollywood

Hollywood saw the largest drop in unsheltered homelessness of all LA LEADS study areas in the past year. The annual regressions in Figure 2.1 (dashed gray lines at *bottom*) show that 530 fewer people were living on Hollywood streets in December 2024 compared with the roughly 1,000 people one year earlier—a 49-percent decline (see Table 2.1). This reduction was larger in magnitude than the two past years of moderate growth that we have previously reported. Compared with 2021 and 2022, an average of 190 fewer people were living on Hollywood’s streets in 2024—a 20-percent decline—with our last enumeration roughly 60 percent below 2023’s peak.

A 40-percent reduction in vehicle-dwellers contributed to this trend (125 people), but its main driver was a near total elimination of encampments. **Eighty-six percent fewer tent-dwellers remained in Hollywood in December 2024 compared with the same time in 2023, a decline of 330 people.** This change is the largest of any kind that we observed in 2024 and represents nearly 60 percent of the net decline seen across the entire combined LA LEADS study area.

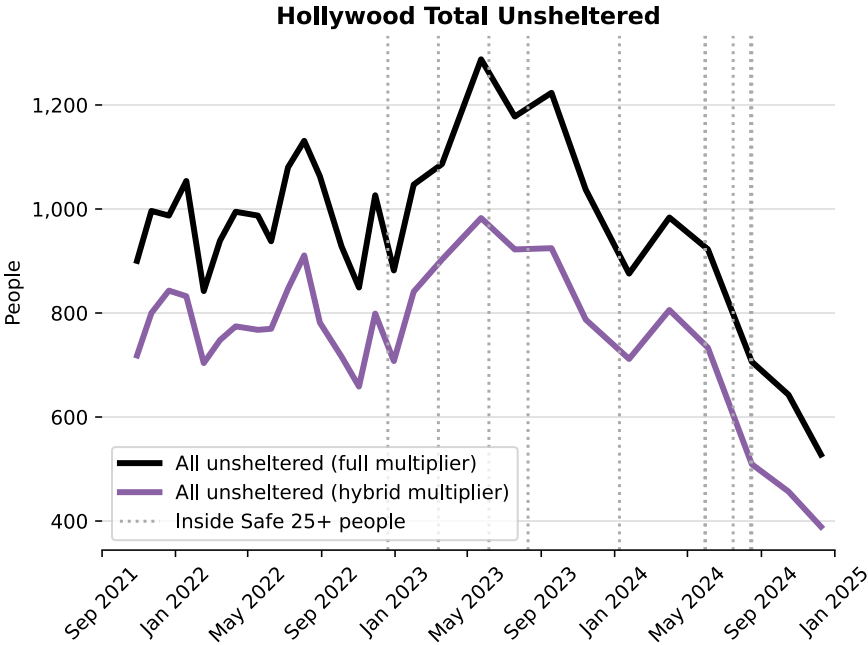
The cause of the decline in vehicle-dwelling in Hollywood is unclear.³ However, the reduction in tents and makeshift structures is strikingly consistent with the level of Inside Safe encampment resolution activity in 2024. Data from the LA CAO show that 321 people were relocated from tents to interim housing near the LA LEADS Hollywood footprint in 2024 (Szabo, 2025), more than double the number housed in 2023 and statistically in line with the 330-person drop in tent-dwellers

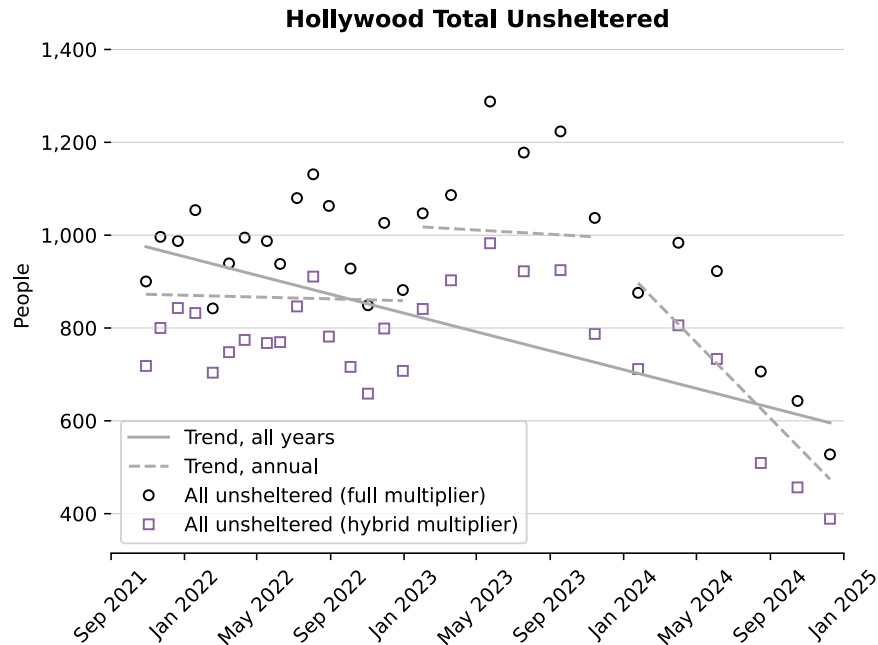
³ LA Department of Transportation data (City of Los Angeles, undated) suggests that no citations for violating oversized vehicle (e.g., recreational vehicle [RV]) parking restrictions were made in the Hollywood LA LEADS study area in 2024, and citations for parking for more than 72 hours or improperly parking trailers declined by 7 percent relative to citations in 2023 (199 versus 212 citations, respectively). Thus, citations seem to be unlikely as a cause of the decline in vehicles that we observed here in 2024.

that we observe. We cannot definitively establish that Inside Safe was the direct cause of the decline, but it seems likely that the program played a large role.

Unfortunately, **the number of rough sleepers in Hollywood saw no significant change.** The number of people in this most-vulnerable population remained at the highest level we have seen in the area—350 people on average in 2024, 17 percent more than in 2021 and 2022—and now comprises a plurality of Hollywood’s unsheltered population (see Figure B.1 in Appendix B). This enumeration-derived finding is reinforced by demographic survey respondents, who reported rough sleeping in Hollywood at nearly double the rate of 2023 (Table B.2 in Appendix B). The new prevalence of rough sleeping is common to the full LA LEADS footprint, suggesting that new strategies are needed to engage people living unsheltered in this way.

Figure 2.1. Hollywood Unsheltered Population





NOTE: LA LEADS population estimates for the Hollywood neighborhood use the full (black) and hybrid (purple) multipliers (see Appendix B). In the top panel, Inside Safe encampment resolutions affecting at least 25 people in or adjacent to the Hollywood enumeration area are shown as vertical dotted lines. In the bottom panel, linear trends describing the full time series (solid gray line) or each year of data (dashed gray lines) are also shown, renormalized to the average of the two sets of results. We base our population change estimates on these regressions as opposed to point-wise comparisons. Note that annual and longer-term trends can diverge meaningfully.

Venice

Similar to Hollywood, the rate of unsheltered homelessness also fell in Venice in 2024 to the lowest levels that we have observed. Figure 2.2 reveals a 22-percent decline between December 2023 and December 2024, a reduction of 165 people (Table 2.1). Compared with two years prior, an average of 225 fewer people (25 percent) were living on Venice’s streets in 2024; our last enumeration is down almost 50 percent from 2022’s peak.

Unlike Hollywood, Venice’s decline was strictly limited to people living in vehicles.⁴ The number of vehicle dwellings we observed fell by 25 percent (80 vehicles) in 2024, enough to account for the entire reduction in unsheltered people. Given the prevalence of vehicle-dwelling at the beginning of the year, however, it is still the dominant form of unsheltered homelessness in Venice (see Figure C.3 in Appendix C).

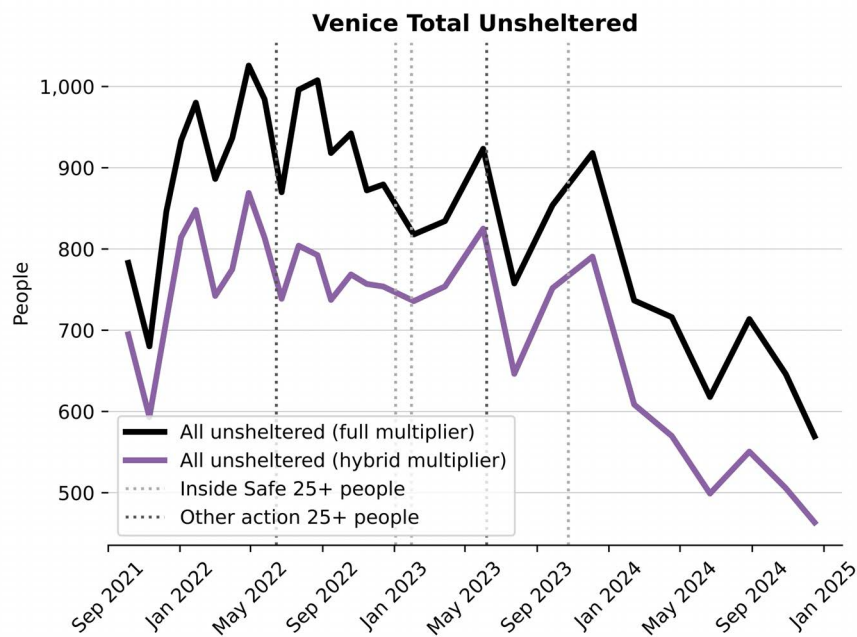
Why vehicle-dwelling declined in Venice is unclear. Citations for violating oversized vehicle (e.g., RV) parking restrictions fell by nearly half in the LA LEADS footprint compared with 2023 (106 versus 200, respectively), when no drop in vehicle-dwelling was observed, and fewer citations were also made for parking for more than 72 hours or improperly parking a trailer (City of Los Angeles, undated). No meaningful Inside Safe actions took place near the LA LEADS survey footprint in

⁴ After being more than halved by Inside Safe actions in January 2023, the number of tents in LA LEADS’s Venice footprint has remained stable at around 40 structures.

Venice in 2024, but sanctioned RV removals may have contributed (although the decline is also present for cars and vans).⁵ Law enforcement cited only 28 people inside the LA LEADS footprint for LAMC 41.18 violations (Kenneth Mejia, LA City Controller, undated-a)—i.e., sitting, sleeping, or lying in designated areas of the public right-of-way—corresponding to only 22 percent of the decline that we observe, although more could have relocated voluntarily.⁶

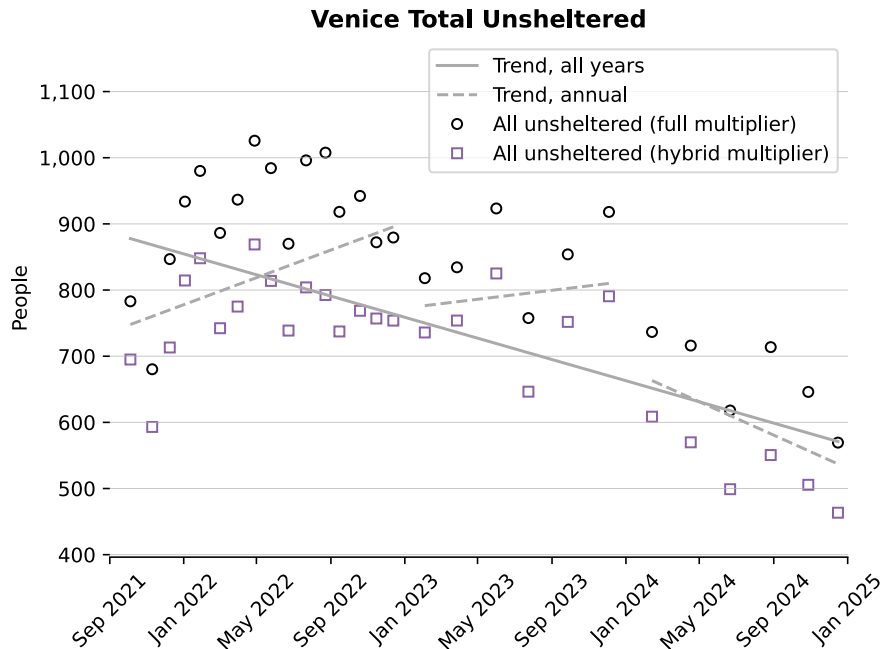
To get a sense of whether people were simply leaving the LA LEADS footprint for other parts of Venice, we began regularly monitoring a larger area in Venice in January 2024 (a portion east of Lincoln Boulevard around Penmar Park up to Walgrove Boulevard). But trends in this extension of our original study area mirrored those in West Venice, evidence that is inconsistent with small geographical shifts of unsheltered people eastward (see Figure C.4 in Appendix C). Thus, more study is needed to determine the extent to which specific policies or other forces drove 2024’s decline in unsheltered homelessness in Venice.

Figure 2.2. Venice Unsheltered Population



⁵ One RV resolution action took place east of the LA LEADS survey area near Penmar Park, leading to the relocation of approximately 30 RVs (“Venice Cleanup Operation Leads to Partial Return of Vehicles: Comprehensive Effort Tackles RV Hotspot,” 2024). Council district-wide, 58 vehicle-dwelling operations took place between June 2022 and June 2024, some of which may also have affected counts in our footprint (Szabo, 2024).

⁶ Outside the study area, while Council District 11 has had more LAMC 41.18–related citations than the other council districts in the LA LEADS study area, the number of such actions fell from 199 in 2023 to 96 in 2024, suggesting any broader-area impact on our enumerations should have been stronger in the past.



NOTE: LA LEADS population estimates for the Venice neighborhood use the full (black) and hybrid (purple) multipliers (see Appendix B). In the top panel, encampment resolutions affecting at least 25 people are shown as vertical gray (Inside Safe) or black (other efforts; Centennial Park, Venice and Dell Avenues) dotted lines. Inside Safe events include all actions in LA Council District 11 (containing Venice); the June 2022 and June 2023 events took place in the study area. In the bottom panel, linear trends describing the full time series (solid gray line) or each year of data (dashed gray lines) are also shown renormalized to the average of the two sets of results. We base our population change estimates on these regressions as opposed to pointwise comparisons. Note that annual and longer-term trends can diverge meaningfully.

Skid Row

Unlike Hollywood and Venice, Skid Row’s unsheltered population did not decline in 2024. While the precise quantitative trend is ambiguous,⁷ Figure 2.3 shows that 2024 marks a clear break with the modest decline observed across 2023. Skid Row is now the only LA LEADS study area whose total unsheltered population has trended upward continuously over the entire 39-month survey baseline, growing by just under 3 percent per year, on average (Table 2.1).

Skid Row’s general stability in 2024 extended individually to the number of people rough sleeping and dwelling in tents and vehicles (Figure C.2 in Appendix C). Compared with late 2021, however, dwelling trends have evolved modestly: There were 60 percent (40) more vehicles and 12 percent (75) fewer tents on the street on an average night in 2024 compared with the start of the LA LEADS survey in 2021.

Static numbers, however, do not mean a static population. Results from our demographic survey, discussed in Chapter 3, show that Skid Row’s unsheltered population in 2024 was younger compared with the population in 2023, had been homeless for less time, was more likely to have spent time in jail

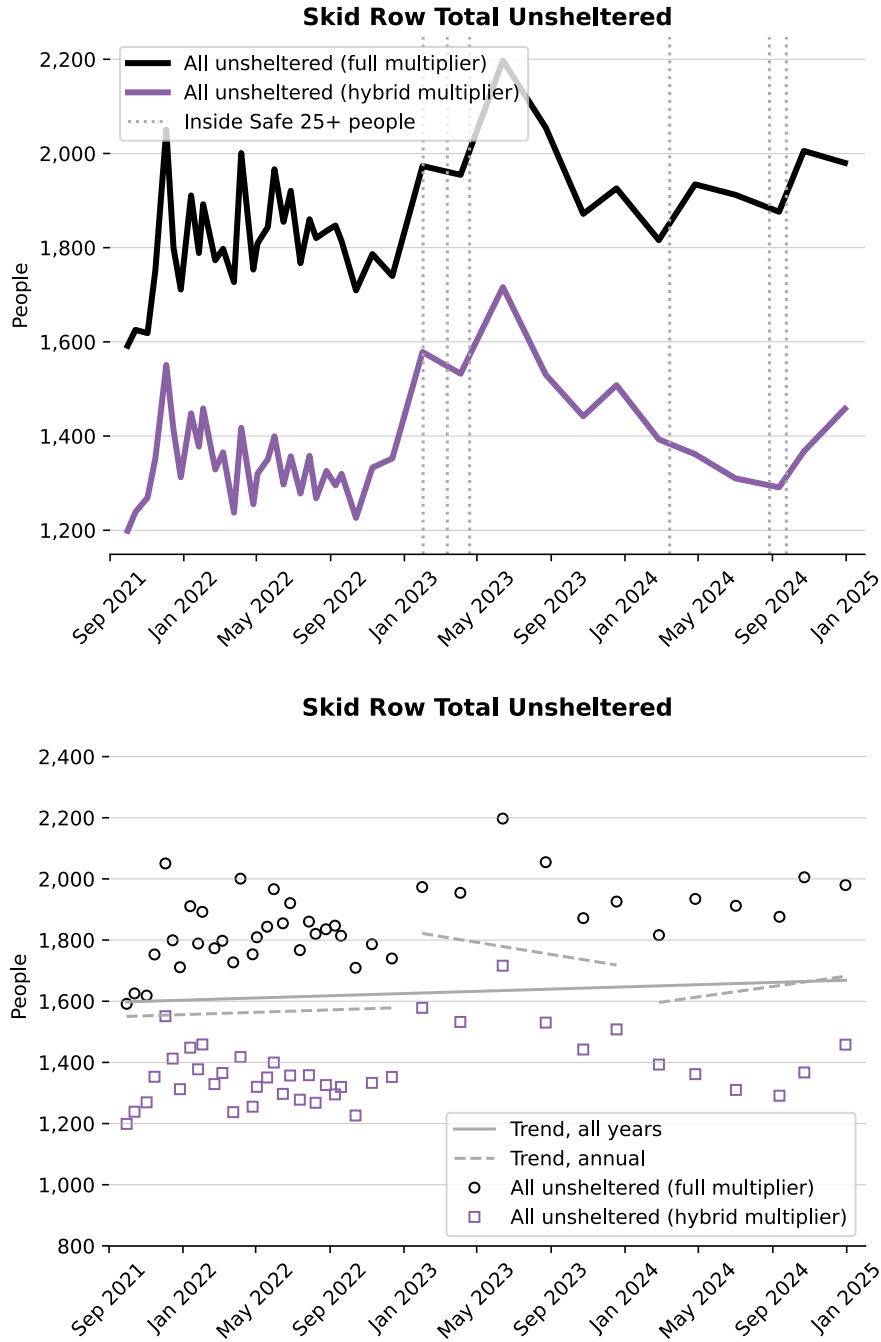
⁷ Skid Row’s unsheltered population was either statistically flat or rose by about 9 percent (170 people) depending on how it is measured (see Table C.5 in Appendix C).

over the past year, and was more likely to have lost their housing because of an eviction (see Appendix D). Thus, there seems to have been significant dynamism in this neighborhood.

Although it was clearly balanced by new inflow, enhanced outflow from a 10-percent increase in countywide interim and permanent housing placements in fiscal year (FY) 2023–2024 versus FY 2022–2023 (26 percent when considering permanent housing only) may have contributed to this dynamism (County of Los Angeles, 2025). Indeed, to the extent that Inside Safe engagements reflect such activity, they moved more people into interim housing from areas near but not inside our study area than ever before (405 people in 2024 versus 388 in 2023; Szabo, 2025). In sum, Skid Row’s population trends may highlight progress in the housing system, but that progress has not yet outpaced annual inflow into this locus of unsheltered homelessness.

As for enforcement actions, LAMC 41.18 citations for dwelling in specified off-limits public areas rose by more than a factor of 7 to 235 people on Skid Row in 2024 compared with just 32 in 2023—i.e., the equivalent of 12 percent of its January 2024 population. Combined with status quo outreach-based housing efforts and any potential migration away from Skid Row (which we cannot quantify but may of course occur), these citations could have slowed what would have otherwise been a more significant increase in unsheltered homelessness but were also insufficient to reverse past trends.

Figure 2.3. Skid Row Unsheltered Population



NOTE: LA LEADS population estimates for the Skid Row neighborhood use the full (black) and hybrid (purple) multipliers (see Appendix B). In the top panel, Inside Safe encampment resolutions affecting at least 25 people in LA Council District 14—containing Skid Row—are shown as vertical dotted lines. Most of these are located near but not inside the LA LEADS study area. In the bottom panel, linear trends describing the full time series (solid gray line) or each year of data (dashed gray lines) are also shown, renormalized to the average of the two sets of results. We base our population change estimates on these regressions as opposed to point-wise comparisons.

Comparing LA LEADS Data with the 2024 PIT Count

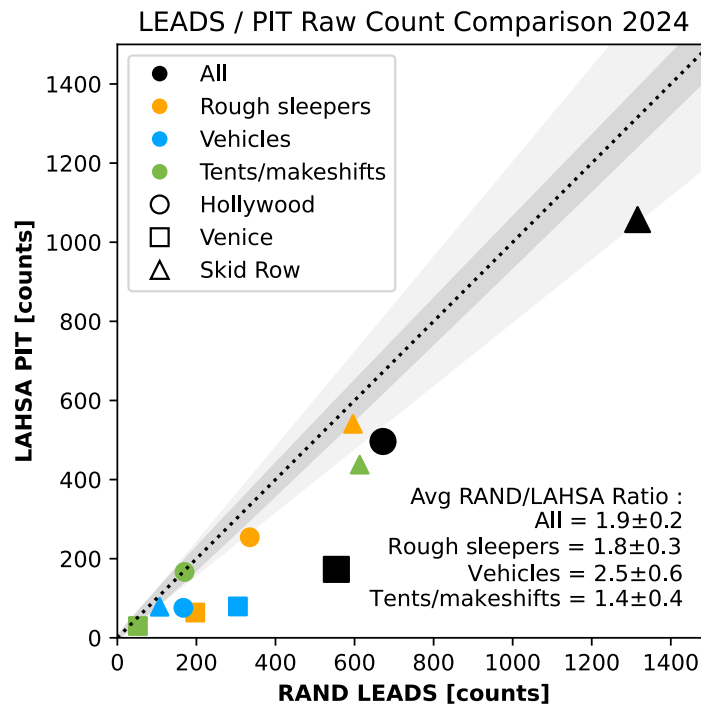
LA LEADS spans the 2022, 2023, and 2024 annual PIT count dates, enabling us to compare multiple independent estimates of unsheltered homelessness in the same areas at roughly the same times. Because LA LEADS data are internally validated observations from multiple trained research field staff observing the same areas, often for years, and PIT data are typically based on a single volunteer’s one-time assessment, consistency between the two datasets would serve as a valuable affirmation of the accuracy of Los Angeles’s homelessness census.⁸

Figure 2.4 and Table 2.1 compare both sets of raw counts from 2024, with LA LEADS’s estimate on the x -axis and the PIT value on the y -axis (LAHSA, undated).⁹ The diagonal dotted line indicates exact agreement; points below and to the right of it mean that the LA LEADS count was larger than the PIT count (i.e., a PIT underestimate) and vice versa. Point shapes denote the LA LEADS neighborhood; colors denote unsheltered categories—rough sleepers (orange), vehicles (blue), and structures (green). The dark shaded region around the dotted line shows where purely random counting errors could account for any mismatches within a 95–percent confidence level; the light shaded region shows agreement to plus or minus 20 percent (chosen for visualization purposes only). As an example, LA LEADS and PIT counters agreed on the number of rough sleepers in Skid Row in 2024 to within random errors (orange triangle), but LA LEADS counters identified more than 20 percent more tents in that neighborhood than the PIT counters (green triangle).

⁸ Both datasets use a mix of foot- and vehicle-based enumerators. The LA LEADS Hollywood count was conducted on the night of the PIT in that neighborhood, whereas the LA LEADS Venice and Skid Row data were obtained three and just under five weeks after their respective PIT count dates, respectively. Weather conditions were nearly identical for the respective PIT and LA LEADS enumerations with the exception of light rain reported in Skid Row on the night of the LA LEADS count. Intuitively, inclement weather might bias the LA LEADS data low relative to the PIT—the opposite of what we see. No major homelessness-related sanitation or removal actions were reported for the two enumerations inside the LA LEADS study areas.

⁹ PIT comparison values were calculated by weighting the LAHSA counts in each census tract by the fraction of that tract’s area lying inside the LA LEADS enumeration zone.

Figure 2.4. Comparisons of LA LEADS Data and the 2024 LAHSA Point-in-Time Count



NOTE: Each LA LEADS enumeration took place within two weeks of that year’s PIT count except for the Skid Row enumeration, which happened one month later. The dark gray band denotes the range of LA LEADS–PIT offsets expected by random chance (95-percent confidence interval assuming Poisson statistics). The light gray shaded area denotes plus or minus 20 percent. Whereas the LA LEADS and PIT enumerations were consistent to within plus or minus 20 percent in most neighborhoods (shapes) and unsheltered categories (colors) in 2023 (Figure F.1 in Appendix F), very few agreed to that level of precision in 2024, and the PIT systematically undercounted relative to LA LEADS.

While the total enumerations were within 20 percent of each other in 2022 and 2023 (see Appendix F), which buoys confidence in the countywide PIT from those years, **the 2024 PIT enumerations amount to only two-thirds of the LA LEADS totals.** Differences in Venice are particularly striking—PIT enumerators found just 173 persons and dwellings in the LA LEADS study area versus the 554 we identified—but the fact that nearly all the points in Figure 2.5 lie below the one-to-one line shows that this gap is systematic and not an undercount of vehicles because of difficulties in identifying them.

This finding is concerning. The 2024 PIT suggested a roughly 10-percent year-on-year total decline in unsheltered homelessness across the City of Los Angeles (LAHSA, 2024). While our cross-check of that result is limited to three neighborhoods comprising 9 to 11 percent of the city’s unsheltered population, if the undercounts that we observed extend more broadly, the true change may have been (substantially) smaller, complicating appropriate policy decisions and future PIT interpretations.

Table 2.1. Detailed Comparison of 2024 LA LEADS and LAHSA PIT Counts

	LA LEADS	PIT	Difference	LA LEADS/PIT Ratio	PIT Percentage Offset from LA LEADS
Total counts	2,542	1,727	815	1.47	-32
Rough sleepers	1,128	859	269	1.31	-24
Dwelling counts	1,414	868	546	1.63	-39
Vehicles	579	234	345	2.47	-60
Structures	835	634	201	1.32	-24

NOTE: Count differences reflect LA LEADS minus PIT values. *PIT Percentage Offsets from LA LEADS* is defined as the PIT value minus the LA LEADS value divided by the LA LEADS value. Thus, negative offsets in that column imply PIT undercounts relative to the LA LEADS enumerations. The LA LEADS datasets and dates used in this comparison are highlighted in Tables C.1, C.2, and C.3 in Appendix C. Previous year comparisons can be found in Appendix F.

Survey Results

We collected survey data between August 2024 and October 2024 from 463 unique respondents ($N = 210$ from Skid Row; $N = 123$ from Hollywood; $N = 130$ from Venice). The survey was similar in content to the 2023 version with a few new items and response options that were added because we saw a high frequency of the relevant issues in free-form responses from previous years (see Appendix B for more details on the survey methodology). Appendix D presents the data and a set of tables showing cross-year comparison statistics, and Appendix E presents tables showing the 2024 neighborhood comparisons. In summary, while many demographic metrics remained similar to those from 2023, sizable shifts in some racial, economic, health, and justice-involvement indicators of unsheltered people—particularly in Hollywood—emerged, reinforcing insights from our enumeration results.

Age, Gender, Race and Ethnicity, Educational Attainment, Veteran Status, and Foster Care System Status

In 2024, the median age was 38 years in Hollywood, 49.5 years in Skid Row, and 45 years in Venice. The ages of the population in Skid Row and Hollywood are trending younger, with fewer people in the 65 and older age group, while the ages of the population in Venice are trending older, with an increasing number of people in the 45 and older age groups (see Table D.1 in Appendix D).

The gender composition is relatively similar between Hollywood and Venice; women make up about 20 percent of the population, whereas closer to 30 percent of the population in Skid Row are women (see Table D.1 in Appendix D and Table E.1 in Appendix E). We did not observe any significant changes over time in gender composition.

The racial and ethnic compositions of our survey samples in Skid Row and Venice did not change markedly over time, but there was a dramatic shift in Hollywood, where the share of Black or African American respondents fell by approximately half (50 percent to 26 percent). Relatedly, the share of White and Hispanic populations increased. As in previous years, two-thirds of the Skid Row sample is Black, while the populations in the other neighborhoods are more diverse: Approximately half of the populations in Hollywood and Venice are White.

Educational attainment among the sample remained largely consistent with previous years. A little less than one-third of the population reported having less than a high school education, about one-third reported having a high school education, and one-third reported having more than a high school education. There were no statistically significant differences across neighborhoods.

Because military veterans experiencing homelessness often have access to additional benefits and services, we added a question in 2023 about whether the respondent served in the U.S. armed forces.¹⁰ We did not observe any statistically meaningful changes over time with the average share of respondents reporting previous active military duty; this changed from 7 percent in 2023 to 9 percent in 2024. In 2024, the share of respondents reporting veteran status was higher in Hollywood (12 percent) relative to the share of respondents reporting veteran status in Skid Row (see Table E.1 in Appendix E). The 2024 Los Angeles Continuum of Care Annual PIT count estimated that the countywide share of people living unhoused who are veterans was about 4 percent of the total unhoused population, but that figure includes both sheltered and unsheltered populations; sheltered people are estimated to be about 30 percent of the overall unhoused population (LAHSA, 2024). If the self-reported share of respondents with veteran status is accurate, it suggests that veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness are more prevalent in these neighborhoods than in other parts of the Los Angeles region.

Given recent research that we conducted showing that more than one-third of transition-age youth who are homeless or unstably housed in Los Angeles County have experience in the foster care system (Hunter et al., 2024), we were also interested in how the child welfare system contributes to rates of unsheltered homelessness among the broader adult population in these neighborhoods. We found that 26 percent of the sample across all three neighborhoods reported having foster care experience; rates were higher in Skid Row and Hollywood (29 percent) than in Venice (20 percent, see Table E.1 in Appendix E).¹¹

Benefits, Income, and Employment

We present the findings related to benefits, income, and employment in Table D.2 in Appendix D and Table E.2 in Appendix E. Rates of benefit receipt and employment status were unchanged over time in Skid Row, and there was a decrease in mean income levels. Findings from Hollywood and Venice showed an increased share of respondents in both neighborhoods reporting Social Security income, Social Security Disability Income, or disability payment receipt. A smaller share of respondents in Venice reported receiving General Assistance or General Relief over time and a larger share reported receiving veteran benefits over time, although this was still less than 5 percent of the sample.

The respondents in Hollywood and Venice also reported increases in monthly income over time, and more respondents in both neighborhoods reported being formally employed (rather than being informally employed or doing gig work) than in the previous year, although the overall rates of employment did not change (8 percent in Hollywood and 20 percent in Venice). Fewer respondents

¹⁰ We note that because of these relative advantages, past research has suggested that self-reports of veteran status may be unreliable. A recent effort by the RAND Survey Research field team to recruit unsheltered veterans, in which self-reported veteran status was validated using the Veterans Administration electronic health record system, found that 13 percent of the sample was not validated (Hunter et al., 2021).

¹¹ While the share of respondents reporting foster care experience in Venice relative to Skid Row and Hollywood is the same, the sample size differences drive the statistically significant difference between the Venice and Skid Row samples relative to the Venice and Hollywood samples.

in Hollywood reported being not employed and not actively looking for work in 2024 relative to previous years.

Table E.2 in Appendix E provides the results from comparisons across the three neighborhoods in 2024. The sample from Skid Row differs from Venice in several ways. The respondents from Skid Row report higher levels of benefit receipt, including the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (73 percent) and General Assistance or General Relief (49 percent) relative to respondents from Venice (60 percent and 36 percent, respectively). On the other hand, respondents from Venice reported higher median incomes relative to Skid Row (\$500 per month versus \$370 per month). Perhaps relatedly, more Venice respondents reported being employed (20 percent) and fewer reported being unemployed but seeking work (31 percent) compared with both the Hollywood and Skid Row samples (less than 10 percent employed and 43 percent unemployed but seeking work in both neighborhoods).

Health Status, Substance Use Status and Consequences, and Criminal Justice Involvement

Health status remained relatively stable across time in the three neighborhoods (see Table D.3 in Appendix D), except that a lower share of respondents reported “excellent” health status; a larger share reported “fair” status in Hollywood compared with past years. Similar to prior years, we found that a larger share of respondents from Skid Row report “fair” or “poor” health (40 percent) relative to respondents in Hollywood (37 percent) and Venice (30 percent), although the gap decreased in Hollywood. These findings are slightly better than what has been recently reported at the state level among people experiencing homelessness, with 45 percent reporting “fair” or “poor” health (Kushel et al., 2023).

Rates of chronic long-term health conditions were also relatively stable from 2023 to 2024 (see Table 3.1, excerpted from Table D.4 in Appendix D). Skid Row had a meaningfully higher share of respondents reporting chronic long-term health conditions relative to respondents in Hollywood and Venice. Respondents from Skid Row reported having a trimorbid condition (co-occurring physical, mental, and substance use disorders) at twice the rate of respondents from Hollywood and Venice (27 percent versus 12 and 13 percent, respectively). Patterns in probable lifetime substance use disorders (50 to 60 percent) and overdose rates (25 to 35 percent) stayed largely stable across time in all neighborhoods.¹²

Involvement in the criminal justice system was also relatively stable across 2023 and 2024 in Venice and Skid Row; A higher share of respondents in Hollywood reported arrest and jail time in 2024 (36 and 39 percent, respectively) relative to the other two neighborhoods (20 and 26 percent for both metrics).

¹² We found an error in the code used in calculating these rates in our previous report and reported the corrected rates in this year's report for the 2023 data (Ward, Garvey, and Hunter, 2024).

Table 3.1. Changes in Health, Substance Use, and Criminal Justice Involvement by Neighborhood Across Years, Percentages

	Hollywood		Skid Row		Venice	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
	(n = 54)	(n = 121)	(n = 103)	(n = 210)	(n = 45)	(n = 129)
Trimorbidity (simultaneously having physical, mental health, and a substance use disorder) conditions ^a	13	13	21	27	17	12
Substance use disorder screening						
Probable SUD (lifetime)	65	61	58	62	57	54
Number of times overdosed (lifetime)						
Zero	59	66	72	65	78	74
1 or more	40	35	28	35	22	26
Criminal justice involvement						
Have been arrested in the past year	30	39	21	20	33	26
Spent one or more nights in jail or prison in the past year	22	36 ^a	15	22 ^a	27	24

NOTE: SUD = substance use disorder. See Appendix B for a description of GAIN-SS score methodology.

^a We defined *trimorbidity* as the intersection of reporting having or having been told that one has all three of the listed conditions, a definition commonly used in the field of providing health and behavioral care to chronically homeless individuals (see, e.g., Rountree, Hess, and Lyke, 2019).

Homelessness Experiences

More than half of respondents in all three neighborhoods reported that their current homeless episode was three years or longer, and this share has changed little over the years we have been conducting surveys (see Table D.5 in Appendix D). Durations in the current location *have* changed over time: Fewer shares of respondents in all three neighborhoods reported staying more than three years in same location.

We also found that the patterns of past 30-day housing search did not change from 2023 to 2024. Among respondents reporting that they were looking for housing in the past 30 days (66 percent; see Table E.4 in Appendix E), people in Skid Row were more likely to report looking for housing with a case manager relative to people in Hollywood and Venice, who were more likely to report looking for housing on their own. Also, among respondents who had not looked for housing in the past 30 days

(34 percent), people in Hollywood and Venice were more likely to report that they do not plan to (12 percent and 17 percent, respectively) relative to Skid Row (4 percent).

We regressed reports of having searched for housing in the past 30 days on a set of demographic and other characteristics: age groups, employment status, total number of benefits, non-White racial identity and Hispanic ethnicity, self-reported health, and various levels of reported income (see Table E.5 in Appendix E).¹³ This analysis revealed a statistically significant association between housing search and age, with nearly all 18- to 24-year-olds reported that they had searched for housing within the past 30 days, but there were consistently lower shares reporting the same activity at older ages (i.e., age groups 25–54, 55–61, and 62+). The rate of older respondents who reported searching for housing within the past 30 days was around 66 percent. The only other statistically significant associations related to housing search were with income. While around 60 percent of those who reported earning less than \$99 per month said that they searched for housing in the past 30 days, other income groups (\$100–\$300, \$300–\$599, \$600–\$899, \$900–\$1,199, \$1,200+) reported searching for housing in the past 30 days at rates between 74 and 80 percent.

We also asked whether any factors forced the respondent to move from where they had been staying in the past year in both the 2023 and 2024 surveys. We expanded our response options in 2024 because we had many respondents in 2023 chose “other, please describe.” Thus, we increased the number of options from six (law enforcement, sanitation activities, neighborhood housed residents, ambassadors or business improvement district staff, Urban Alchemy or CIRCLE teams, and “other, please describe”) to ten (the previous items, plus local business owners, local or state government staff, homeless outreach workers, and other unhoused people). The share of respondents who reported being forced to move by law enforcement, sanitation workers, housed residents, ambassadors or business improvement staff, or Urban Alchemy or CIRCLE teams did not change. However, a large share of the 2024 respondents chose one or more of the new response options (see Table E.4 in Appendix E). Hollywood respondents were more likely to choose local business owners having forced a move—a finding that, if directed mainly at vehicle-dwellers, may relate to some uncertainty around drivers of declines in unsheltered homelessness in our enumeration data discussed previously. Respondents from Hollywood were also more likely than respondents from other neighborhoods to report that local and state government staff were responsible for forcing a move. Unsurprisingly, both Hollywood and Venice respondents were more likely to respond that law enforcement or housed residents had forced a move relative to Skid Row.

In Table 3.2, we present the current shelter status that respondents reported as part of the screening process. More specifically, we asked participants whether they were currently living in one of the following types of shelter: tent or makeshift structure, car or van, or RV. While the proportion of participants indicating that they lived in any such dwelling remained stable in Skid Row at roughly 60 percent, we observed significant changes in Hollywood and Venice between 2023 and 2024. Specifically, the percentage of respondents who reported living in a tent or makeshift structure fell by more than half in Hollywood while the share who reported living literally unsheltered (i.e., sleeping rough) more than doubled in both areas. These findings corroborate our enumeration results

¹³ These regressions also include *site fixed effects*, binary indicator variables for each site so that each model reflects an average of the relationships explored *within* survey sites (ignoring average differences *between* each survey site). However, our results are largely similar in testing these models without site fixed effects.

presented in Chapter 2. As also emphasized in Chapter 2, these changes are consistent with the finding that while the number of encampments in Hollywood and Venice declined, many people still remain unhoused and are now more likely to be living without any informal type of shelter.

Table 3.2. Current Shelter Status by Neighborhood Across Years, by Percentages

	Hollywood			Skid Row			Venice		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
	(n = 104)	(n = 46)	(n = 122)	(n = 212)	(n = 86)	(n = 206)	(n = 99)	(n = 30)	(n = 129)
Current shelter status									
Tent or other makeshift shelter	60	80 ^a	29 ^{a,b}	61	58	54	63	33 ^a	21 ^a
Car or van	1	7	5	1	7 ^a	7 ^a	6	17	19 ^a
RV	2	2	1	0	0	0	4	27 ^a	12 ^a
Literally unsheltered	38	11 ^a	66 ^{a,b}	38	35	39	27	23	48 ^{a,b}

^a Denotes a statistically significant difference at the 90-percent confidence level or greater for the same characteristic in a given study site between the first year and later year(s).

^b Denotes a statistically significant difference at the 90-percent confidence level or greater for the same characteristic in a given study site between the 2023 and 2024 samples.

Outreach Services

Compared with past years, respondents in 2024 reported being in contact with a similar number of outreach or case management workers in their current episode of homelessness (see Table D.6). Nearly 80 percent of the sample reported working with an outreach or case manager during their current homelessness episode. About 20 percent of respondents in each neighborhood reported working with one worker and about 20 percent reported working with five or more. This may not be surprising given the length of time that many respondents reported living unsheltered. We found that reports about last contact with workers were relatively similar to those from 2023; around one-third of participants reported having contact within the past week and about one-fifth of respondents across neighborhoods reported having had more than 90 days since last contact.

Water and snacks remain the most prevalent resources that people who are living unsheltered report receiving. Notably, the share of respondents reporting the receipt of other services—e.g., safe sex resources, harm reduction supplies, documentation, housing need assessment, and temporary shelter offers—was reduced, especially in Hollywood. Overall, a lower share of respondents from Venice reported receiving water and snacks, safe sex resources, harm reduction supplies, documentation, transportation services, or any shelter or housing resource services relative to Skid Row (see Table E.6 in Appendix E).

More than half of the sample reported receiving medical support while living unsheltered. Of those reporting receipt of medical support, most respondents had received those services within the past three months. We added an additional follow-up question in 2024 to elicit where respondents had received medical services since beginning to live on the streets. We found that most services were received in traditional health care settings, predominately in emergency rooms, followed by urgent care or drop-in clinics or a doctor's office (see Table E.6 in Appendix E). These relatively high rates of care received in the emergency room are similar to findings observed in a representative sample of people experiencing homelessness in California that reported 38 percent of people experiencing homelessness had visited an emergency room in the past six months (Kushel et al., 2023). Receipt of care in a clinic was higher in Skid Row relative to Hollywood. Nearly 30 percent of respondents reported receiving care in other community settings, and 20 percent specified that they had received care from a mobile clinic or van. Reports of receiving care from a mobile clinic or van were higher in Skid Row relative to the other two neighborhoods, and receipt of care in an encampment or on the street was higher in Hollywood and Skid Row relative to Venice.

Housing Needs and Preferences

Similar to previous years, we found that most respondents expressed interest in receiving housing (see Table D.7 in Appendix D and Table E.7 in Appendix E), although rates are lower in Hollywood (84 percent) and Venice (86 percent) relative to Skid Row (97 percent). The share of respondents who reported that they are currently on a waitlist for housing continued to rise in Skid Row (35 percent) and remained relatively stable from 2023 in Hollywood and Venice, at 44 percent and 38 percent, respectively. The shares of respondents reporting being on a waitlist were still significantly higher than 2022 in Hollywood and Skid Row.

Over the past couple of years, we asked respondents about the last time that they were offered housing by a service provider and of what kind (see Table D.8 in Appendix D; ten options from safe camping to permanent supportive housing were given). At 39 percent of the sample in Hollywood and more in Venice and Skid Row (43 percent and 51 percent, respectively), the predominate response was "never." About one-quarter of respondents told us that they had been offered housing in the past 90 days, a figure that has not changed over time or between neighborhoods. That said, respondents in Hollywood were more likely to report having been offered housing in the past three to six months relative to 2023.

We also continued to ask respondents about whether they had any specific needs or requirements for housing or shelter. About one-half expressed having a need for storage of possessions, and the next most frequent need was "allowed to stay with partner, spouse, child, or roommate." These rates were consistent with those in 2023 but remain significantly elevated relative to 2022. The need of "allowed to stay with pet(s)" increased in Venice to 42 percent but remained stable in Hollywood and Skid Row at 42 percent and 39 percent, respectively. The share of respondents who reported that any housing or shelter "needs to be in a particular neighborhood" was notably higher in Hollywood and Venice relative to Skid Row. This share has also risen over time in Venice, reaching a high of 47 percent in 2024. Endorsements of "handicap accessible" housing or shelter were highest in Skid Row at 33 percent, relative to Hollywood and Venice at 17 and 12 percent, respectively, and these rates

have not changed over time. As we observed in 2023, about 20 percent of the sample expressed another requirement for housing or shelter—most frequently, private space, safe area or community, near transportation, and on site supportive or medical services—similar to results from 2023.

In the report for 2023 (Ward, Garvey, and Hunter, 2024), we provided an initial examination of the extent of different types of housing or shelter offers, acceptance rates, durations, and exit reasons among a population continuing to experience unsheltered homelessness. Table D.8 in Appendix D presents an update on the offer and acceptance rates, which shows the findings from the 2024 effort and tests of differences over time. More specifically, we asked respondents if they had ever been offered any of ten housing or shelter options since becoming homeless in Los Angeles. If respondents reported receiving an offer, we asked whether they accepted the option that had been offered. If respondents reported that they accepted the option, we then asked how long their most recent stay in that setting was and whether they left voluntarily (i.e., “I chose to leave”) or involuntarily (i.e., “Someone else made the decision for me to leave”); the results from these two follow-up questions are included in Appendix E, Table E.8.

We found notable increases in the share of respondents who reported receiving housing or shelter offers in Skid Row, specifically for group shelter, recovery or sober living housing, shared housing, and “tiny” homes. In Hollywood, we saw significant increases in the share of respondents reporting offers of long-term stays in hotels or motels, transitional housing, and permanent housing in hotel or motel-like settings. We did not observe any significant changes in responses regarding such offers in Venice. Overall, the number of offers was low, especially for permanent housing options (e.g., only 13 percent reported having been offered supportive housing; see Table D.8 in Appendix D). Acceptance rates were also relatively low: The highest acceptance rate was 53 percent for a long-term stay in a hotel or motel setting.

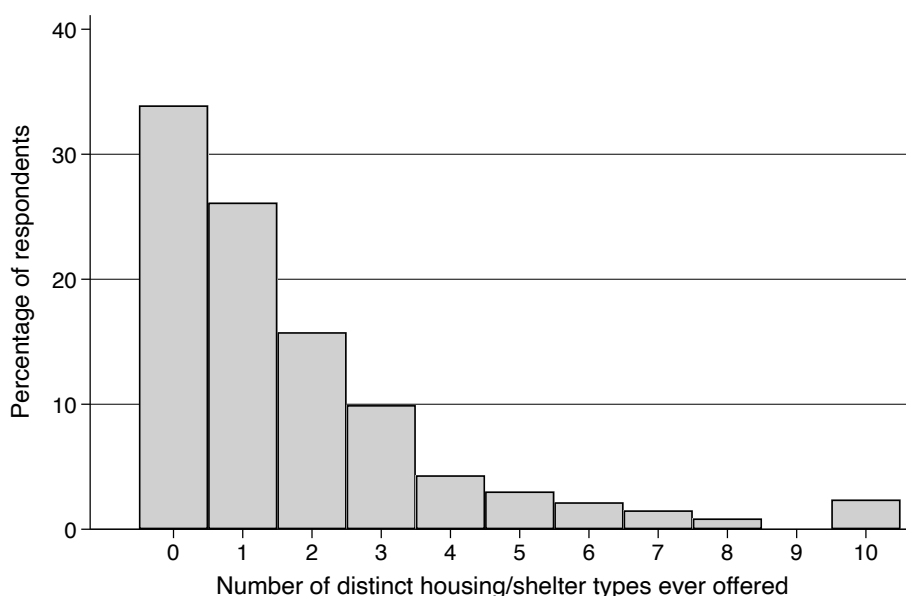
The main takeaways on this topic are, first, that offers of housing—especially more-permanent housing—are rare among our respondents. Group shelter remains the most-offered option, at between roughly 30 and 45 percent across sites. We saw notable increases in offers of group shelter and sober living accommodations among respondents on Skid Row, although we note that the acceptance rate of sober living declined as the offer rate increased, suggesting that further increases to this option may yield limited results. In Hollywood, we also observed notable increases in offers of interim housing with services and stays in hotels or motels.

Two caveats are in order for interpreting these findings. The first is that, during 2023, we had a notably smaller sample size than in 2024 (and 2021 and 2022). This factor, combined with the relative rarity of all these outcomes, suggests that caution is warranted in interpreting any changes.

The second, more general point is that negative selection may play a large role in our results. If offers of permanent housing are typically effective at getting and keeping people off the streets (Cohen, 2024), then those who got such offers and accepted them and remained housed are, by definition, not in our sample, which is conditioned on not being sheltered or housed. That is, if permanent housing is an effective intervention, the frequency of such offers reported by an unsheltered population should be low, as we found. However, this evidence is inconclusive; it is consistent with a setting in which many individuals receive offers of housing and leave our sample *and* with a setting in which few receive such offers because they are rarely made.

In all cases, in an acuity-based system for offering housing, we would expect that individuals with more-significant physical or behavioral health issues should receive relatively more offers of housing (leaving aside whether they accept those offers at a high rate, which drives the negative selection discussed previously). Figure 3.1 presents the distribution of distinct housing or shelter offers reported by our respondents (for example, if a respondent reported ever being offered group shelter and also reported receiving an offer for a long-term stay in a hotel or motel, this would count as two distinct offers of housing). Table 3.3 shows the mean total values by neighborhood across time. Around 35 percent of those surveyed reported never having received an offer for any of housing or shelter in 2024. Roughly 25 percent received one offer, and the remaining 40 percent reported receiving between two and eight offers.

Figure 3.1. Number of Distinct Housing or Shelter Types Ever Offered to Survey Participants



NOTE: This figure is a histogram of the total number of offers of distinct housing or shelter types ever received by survey participants using the housing or shelter categories reported in Table D.8 in Appendix D.

Table 3.3. Total Housing or Shelter Offers by Site over Time, Means

	Hollywood		Skid Row		Venice	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
	(n = 54)	(n = 123)	(n = 103)	(n = 210)	(n = 46)	(n = 130)
Total distinct housing or shelter offers	1.65	1.98	1.17	1.75 ^a	1.26	1.50

^a Denotes a statistically significant difference at the 90-percent confidence level or greater for the same characteristic in a given study site between the 2023 and 2024 samples.

Our survey data showing that racial and ethnic minorities disproportionately experience homelessness suggest that these respondents may tend to, relatedly, receive a higher number of offers of housing or shelter. Table E.9 in Appendix E shows results from simple regression tests of this and other hypotheses regarding acuity-related determinants of housing or shelter offers. We regressed the number of reported offers on several demographic metrics to see whether individuals with certain characteristics were more likely to report housing or shelter offers than others.

In terms of race, our 2024 data do not show a positive association between being non-White and receiving housing or shelter offers. This differs from results from a similar analysis in 2023, where we found that reporting a non-White racial identity was positively statistically significantly correlated with receiving more housing or shelter offers.

In terms of self-reported health, we estimate a U-shaped probability of receiving housing or shelter offers. The baseline number of offers for those in excellent health is 1.4 offers, but we see statistically significantly higher numbers for those in “very good” health (just over 2) and for those in “good” health (just under 2). For those in “fair” or “poor” health, the association is slightly lower (around 1.7 to 1.8), but the differences with those in excellent health are not statistically meaningful. In terms of either a chronic or long-term mental health condition or a mental health condition cooccurring with a chronic physical health condition and a substance use disorder (trimorbidity), we also see a positive association, such that people expressing worse health received more housing or shelter offers. This finding contrasts with our results from 2023: We did not identify a statistically significant positive relationship on these dimensions. Thus, our most-recent data are more in line with expectations in an acuity-based housing system.

Again, negative selection is important to consider when interpreting these associations. For the results on self-reported health, if those in the worst health are, in fact, receiving appropriate housing (e.g., permanent supportive housing), then we should see few unhealthy people reporting receipt of many housing offers in our sample—most such people became housed. For the results on chronic mental health conditions, it may be the case that such individuals must be approached many times to gain the trust necessary for any offer of permanent housing to be considered, so it may be reasonable to expect to see reports of more offers for such individuals.

Cell Phone, Internet, and Current Documentation Status of Respondents

Results regarding our survey questions about cell phone, internet, and digital application use, as well as possession of identification and other related documents, are reported in Table D.9 in Appendix D and Table E.10 in Appendix E. This information is important because cell phones and identification documentation reduce barriers to housing and related services (Clark, 2023; Kritz, 2019).

About one-half of respondents we surveyed reported having a working cell phone; the share is highest in Venice (56 percent) and lowest in Skid Row (43 percent). Most respondents reported being able to connect to the internet and use digital applications. Neither age, gender, race or ethnicity, nor having a long-term or chronic health condition correlated with having a cell phone (Table E.11 in

Appendix E), but reporting “poor” health status relative to “excellent” status was associated with lower rates of phone possession.¹⁴

Similar to 2023, we estimate that about one-half of respondents across these neighborhoods do not currently possess a driver’s license or other state identification. Fewer reported having a Social Security card and proof of citizenship or birth certificate, indicating that there continues to be a need to help unsheltered people secure and maintain documents that are required to obtain permanent housing and other resources.

¹⁴ These findings relate to recent research using cell phones to conduct homelessness research (Smith, 2022), which suggests that, while the subpopulation of people experiencing homelessness who are cell phone users may not be representative of the overall population of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness, this subpopulation overrepresents more—historically vulnerable groups and groups with higher levels of acuity so that such research efforts may play an important role in monitoring progress on these subgroups of particular policy interest.

Discussion and Conclusion

Global Insights from Three Years of Observations

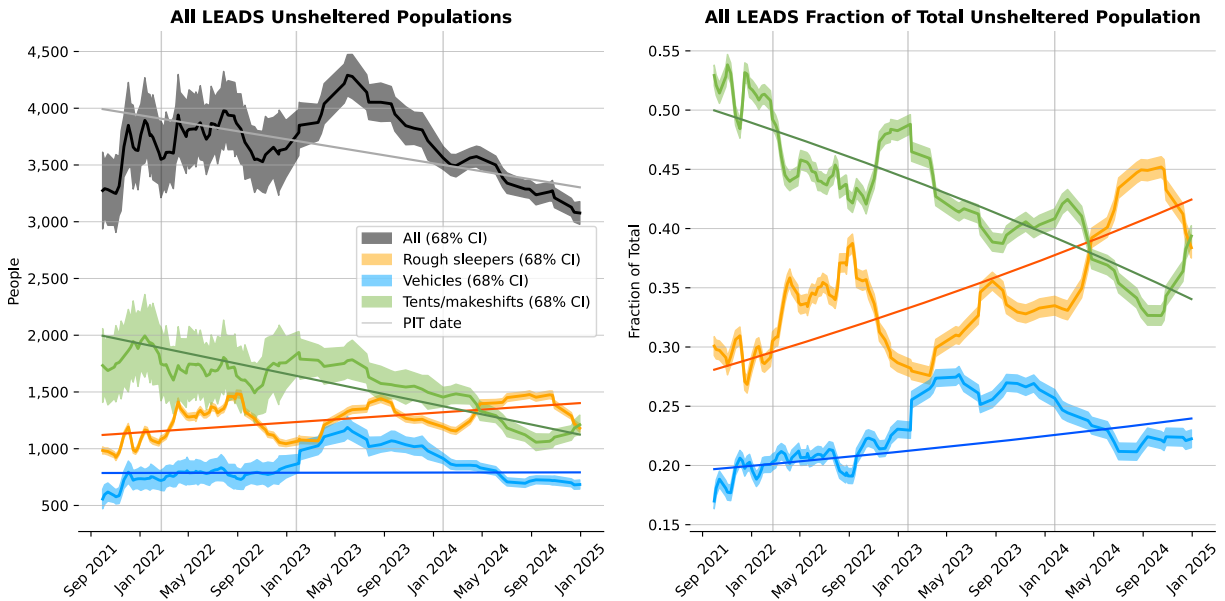
Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1 show how the full LA LEADS population has evolved over the study's 39 months. The lefthand panels display the estimated total population from these three neighborhoods across the major categories or modalities of unsheltered homelessness—vehicles, tent and makeshift structures (structures), and rough sleepers. The righthand panel in Figure 4.1 shows the fraction of the total unsheltered population enumerated in each of these modalities.

We draw two main conclusions from these data. First, **the overall decline in unsheltered homelessness** (black line at *left*) **has been driven entirely by a reduction in tents and makeshift structures** (green line). The linear trend lines, estimated from each time series, show that the 5.8-percent average annual reduction in the total unsheltered population directly reflects a 43-percent total drop in tents and tent-dwellers since late 2021. **Of the remainder, 80 percent of tent-dwellers now live in Skid Row**, up from 60 percent in 2021 and 22 (Table C.5 in Appendix C). Simultaneously, rough sleeping has risen 25 percent (orange line) and vehicle-dwelling has remained stable (blue line).¹⁵ In total, using averages from the first and last years of our study, **one rough sleeper or vehicle has been added to the street for every 1.5 tents removed**. Thus, **existing strategies are successfully addressing many encampments but are failing to address other forms of unsheltered homelessness**.¹⁶

¹⁵ Vehicle counts have risen by 38 percent over the LA LEADS study period, but declines in the average number of occupants of cars, vans, and RVs have offset their growing numbers. See Table B.1 in Appendix B and Figure C.5 in Appendix C.

¹⁶ Some of these long-term correlations between changes in tent-dwelling, vehicle-dwelling, and rough sleeping also appear on shorter timescales. Once annual trends are removed (gray dashed lines in Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3), on average, the marginal tent count falls as the marginal rough sleeping count rises (Pearson coefficient $\rho = -0.27$ at $p = 0.01$ using the full time series). Conversely, the marginal vehicle count rises with both rough sleepers ($\rho = 0.30$ at $p = 0.00$) and tents ($\rho = 0.39$ at $p = 0.00$). Thus, while we observe patterns consistent with a *general* replacement of tent-dwellers by rough sleepers over the years since LA LEADS started, there is evidence of the same dynamics happening on a more immediate basis (see Figure C.6 in Appendix C). These correlations still do not imply direct causality, but they point to a closer coupling between unsheltered modalities than annual data alone would suggest. These correlations are consistent with scenarios wherein encampment resolutions tend to increase rough sleeping, while the marginal newly unsheltered person is roughly equally likely to sleep rough or live in a tent or vehicle. More evidence is needed to build confidence in any interpretation, however, and gathering such evidence would help policymakers address potentially unintended consequences of current programs.

Figure 4.1. Full LA LEADS Count and Unsheltered Population Time Series



NOTE: This figure shows the unsheltered population trends for the full LA LEADS study area broken out by dwelling modality—sleeping rough (orange), living in tents and makeshift structures (green), or living in a car, van, or RV (blue). The left panel shows absolute population levels, while the right panel shows each subpopulation as a fraction of all unsheltered people. In both panels, thick bands show the 68-percent confidence interval (corresponding to roughly one standard deviation from the mean estimate) on the full-multiplier population inferences (binomial estimates for the fractions at right), colored lines show regressions to these data, and vertical gray lines denote PIT count dates. Figure C.5 in Appendix C shows the same trends using unweighted raw counts.

The second important conclusion is that **rough sleepers now dominate the LA LEADS unsheltered population, comprising 42 percent of all people inferred to be living on the street in December 2024**. These most at-risk individuals now make up a growing plurality of all unsheltered people (right panel) and a majority of all counts (Figure C.5 in Appendix C). This shift also emerges clearly in our demographic surveys in Hollywood and Venice, wherein record percentages of respondents reported living with literally no shelter (rough sleeping) at the time of being surveyed (Table 3.1).

PIT data going back to 2018 suggest that this change can be viewed as a return to a pre–coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic mix of modalities of unsheltered homelessness (LAHSA, 2019; LAHSA, 2020). But because of the change that this shift represents from recent years, it presents clinical, tactical, and strategic challenges to the homelessness services system.

Clinically, this shift suggests that the average acuity of clients will rise as more of them live totally exposed to the elements, increasing the challenges that care professionals face (see Garcia, Doran, and Kushel [2024] and references therein). Tactically, because fewer of outreach teams’ potential clients are dwelling in dense tent communities, it implies that these teams will have to traverse larger areas to engage the same number of people, likely reducing the teams’ average efficiency. Strategically, it reinforces the fact that encampment-based housing policies will become less effective as fewer people live in encampments—largely because of past successes in resolving the encampments. Again, responses to our demographic survey reinforce these concerns: Hollywood universally and Skid Row

and Venice variously reported fewer people in self-reported “excellent” health, fewer people receiving safe sex and harm reduction supplies, fewer people having key documents and housing assessments, and more people waiting longer between health care visits than in 2023 (see Tables D.3, D.4, and D.6 in Appendix D).

Taken together, this evidence suggests that new policies will be needed to extend 2024’s successes into a future that looks meaningfully different from the one that existing strategies were designed to address.

Table 4.1. Results from Unsheltered Population Regressions in Hollywood, Venice, and Skid Row

Quantity	Overall	Hollywood	Skid Row	Venice
Annual average percentage change over the full September 2021 through December 2024 time series	-5.8	-14.2	2.6	-11.8
<i>p</i> -value	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.000
<i>N</i>	97	28	41	28
Annual average percentage change from September 2021 through November 2023	6.6	9.4	7.9	0.3
<i>p</i> -value	0.000	0.021	0.000	0.935
<i>N</i>	77	22	34	21
Annual percentage change from December 2023 to December 2024	-15.3	-49.6	7.0	-24.8
<i>p</i> -value	0.000	0.009	0.118	0.034
<i>N</i>	20	6	7	7

NOTE: Percentage changes (in units of percent per year) are derived from linear regressions to the logarithm of the population estimates in each study area. Bolded entries denote those with statistical significance of > 95 percent ($p < 0.05$); *p*-values of 0.000 denote truncations for display purposes only.

Limitations

This study is geographically limited: The results discussed in this report may not generalize to the rest of Los Angeles. We selected these three neighborhoods given their persistent and substantial rates of unsheltered homelessness and the focus on them by policymakers and other interested stakeholders.

While we provide relatively frequent enumerations, the counts occur bimonthly and may not reflect immediate effects from such events as encampment clearings that may resolve within two months. The changes over time reflected in our data suggest that the frequency of our counts is allowing us to detect meaningful trends over time.

Conclusions

Our overall results suggest real progress, represented by a 15-percent (530-person) net reduction in the combined estimated unsheltered population, driven by larger declines in two neighborhoods: Hollywood (49 percent) and Venice (22 percent). In Skid Row, where the population did not decline, demographic survey results nevertheless point to significant turnover in the underlying population, which is now younger, less chronically homeless, and more likely than in the past to have become homeless through an eviction. This compositional change is consistent with unsheltered residents who have been on the streets the longest time being housed at an increasing rate.

Taken together, findings from 2024 are consistent with a scenario in which a countywide increase in interim and permanent housing placements enabled more people to come off the street (County of Los Angeles, undated; Los Angeles Housing Department, undated)—even if those placements were balanced by new inflows in some areas. After two years of no change or increases in the unsheltered population in our study area, these changes are encouraging, even if they manifested only in a quantitative decline in Hollywood and Venice. Leaders should continue to prioritize and streamline the creation of permanent housing assets to ensure that Los Angeles’s substantial remaining unsheltered population has a route indoors.

However, outside Hollywood—where a 330-person (86-percent) drop in tent-dwelling seems clearly linked to a nearly identical number of Inside Safe interim housing placements in 2024—naming the specific policy mechanism that facilitated this progress is difficult. We find no clear connection between Venice’s decline in tent-dwelling—driven by vehicle-dwellers—and Inside Safe or law enforcement actions, including LAMC 41.18 and vehicle parking citations. Conversely, the fact that the equivalent of 12 percent of Skid Row’s unsheltered population was cited for LAMC 41.18 anticamping violations in 2024 seems not to have affected Skid Row’s total numbers.

Irrespective of causal factors, our data clearly reveal that many people are either being left behind by existing policies or that those policies are not effective at reaching the most-vulnerable unsheltered people.

At the highest level, the only population to have fallen consistently over the course of our study period is tent-dwellers. This has led to a situation where **rough sleeping—living literally without shelter—is now the most common form of unsheltered homelessness in our study area**. As of December 2024, more than 40 percent of unsheltered people fell into this category, up from less than 30 percent in late 2021. As encampments host fewer unsheltered people, such encampment resolutions as Inside Safe will, by definition, lose efficacy as a means to reduce unsheltered homelessness.

Beyond that strategic challenge, the shift toward rough sleeping presents tactical and clinical obstacles to progress. Tactically, street outreach teams will likely become less efficient as their potential contacts become harder to keep track of. Thus, while existing policies were effective at addressing the previously dominant unsheltered population, they seem ill-suited to today’s population (at least in our study area). Clinically, service providers—who already suffer from high turnover rates because of the difficulty of their jobs—will likely become further stressed as their average client’s needs increase from the unique tolls of sleeping rough.

Results from our demographic survey already reveal trends in these directions. The fraction of respondents who reported sleeping rough at the time of being surveyed more than doubled in both

Hollywood and Venice compared with past years, and those respondents also reported staying in the same location for shorter periods than in past years.

In general, Hollywood seems to have evolved the most. A positive outlier in some metrics in 2023 (Ward, Hunter, and Garvey, 2023), as encampment-dwelling fell by 86 percent in 2024, Hollywood's unsheltered population reported fewer people in "excellent" health; more people having spent time in jail; fewer people receiving condoms and safe sex materials, harm reduction supplies, critical documents, and housing assessments; and longer delays in receiving health care services (see Appendix D). Some but not all of these trends are also common to Skid Row and Venice.

Our surveys reveal some positive changes in well-being—e.g., a higher fraction of unsheltered people in Hollywood and Venice were receiving supplemental security income supports in 2024, and mean incomes (perhaps connectedly) rose in both places—but these appear to be exceptions. Most notably, as in past years, the majority of respondents continue to report that they have been homeless for at least three years, and the population in Skid Row continues to be older, more likely to be female and/or Black or African American, less likely to be working, and more likely to report simultaneously having mental health, physical health, and substance use disorders relative to the populations in the other two neighborhoods. Thus, despite the higher rate of turnover in this population—suggested by declines in the mean age and shorter homelessness episodes in 2024 compared with 2023—Skid Row remains a core challenge to making lasting progress in resolving unsheltered homelessness in Los Angeles.

In sum, the picture painted by our joint enumeration and survey results is one of progress for those amenable to existing homelessness strategies, but it also shows an increasing level of vulnerability for those who remain. Thus, to ensure 2024's success extends durably and equitably into the future, new policies that address rough sleepers and their potentially higher level of need should be developed and deployed.

Inside Safe and similar encampment resolution programs operate on the principle that accepting shelter or housing often depends on maintaining social connections formed on the street. These programs' success highlights that building trust—not just offering shelter—must be a primary goal of outreach to rough sleepers, who are often the least connected to people and places. For this population, multidisciplinary outreach teams may become their main social tie, making relationship-building essential for positive housing and health outcomes. As teams across different areas increasingly encounter more-mobile individuals, effective collaboration and real-time data-sharing, such as regularly updated by-name lists—will be crucial (Dones and Espinoza, 2024; U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2022a, 2022b). While building these systems is challenging, emerging models, such as the MacArthur Park Care Collaborative, may offer promising examples that can be monitored and scaled (Newton, 2025).

We hope the data and analyses presented here will help policymakers, service providers, and the broader community in the effort to make continued progress in addressing the evolving challenges of addressing unsheltered homelessness in Los Angeles.

Abbreviations

CAO	City Administrator's Office
FY	fiscal year
LA	Los Angeles, California
LAHSA	Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
LA LEADS	Los Angeles longitudinal enumeration and demographic survey
LAMC	Los Angeles Municipal Code
PIT	Point-in-Time
RV	recreational vehicle

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