In recent years, homelessness in New York City has reached the highest levels since the Great Depression of the 1930s. [1] [2]

In November 2019, there were 63,092 homeless people, including 14,973 homeless families with 22,258 homeless children, sleeping each night in the New York City municipal shelter system. Families make up more than two-thirds of the homeless shelter population.

Over the course of City fiscal year 2018, 133,284 different homeless men, women, and children slept in the New York City municipal shelter system. This includes over 45,600 different homeless New York City children.

In 2015, families entering shelters predominantly came from a few clustered zip codes in the poorest neighborhoods in New York City. [3] However, homeless families and single adults come from every zip code in NYC prior to entering shelters.

The number of homeless New Yorkers sleeping each night in municipal shelters is now 62 percent higher than it was ten years ago. The number of homeless single adults is 144 percent higher than it was ten years ago.

Research shows that the primary cause of homelessness, particularly among families, is lack of affordable housing. Surveys of homeless families have identified the following major immediate, triggering causes of homelessness: eviction; doubled-up or severely overcrowded housing; domestic violence; job loss; and hazardous housing conditions. [4] [5] [6]

Research shows that, compared to homeless families, homeless single adults have much higher rates of serious mental illness, addiction disorders, and other severe health problems. [7]

Each night thousands of unsheltered homeless people sleep on New York City streets, in the subway system, and in other public spaces. There is no accurate measurement of New York City’s unsheltered homeless population, and recent City surveys significantly underestimate the number of unsheltered homeless New Yorkers.

Studies show that the large majority of street homeless New Yorkers are people living with mental illness or other severe health problems. [8] [9]

African-American and Latinx New Yorkers are disproportionately affected by homelessness. Approximately 57 percent of heads of household in shelters are African-American, 32 percent are Latinx, 7 percent are white, less than 1 percent are Asian-American or Native American, and 3 percent are of unknown race/ethnicity.
References


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For more information, please visit www.coalitionforthehomeless.org.