NEW YORK CITY HOMELESSNESS
The Basic Facts

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

- In October 2020, there were 57,341 homeless people, including 18,653 homeless children, sleeping each night in the New York City municipal shelter system. An all-time record 20,210 single adults slept in shelters in October 2020.

- Over the course of City fiscal year 2019, 132,660 different homeless men, women, and children slept in the New York City municipal shelter system. This includes over 44,300 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 50 percent higher than it was ten years ago. The number of homeless single adults is 115 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]

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


*Updated December 2020
For more information, please visit www.coalitionforthehomeless.org.*