

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 December 2020, there were **56,849 homeless people**, including **18,099 homeless children**, sleeping each night in the New York City municipal shelter system. An all-time record **20,811 single adults** slept in shelters in December 2020.
- Over the course of City fiscal year 2020, **122,926 different homeless men, women, and children** slept in the New York City municipal shelter system. This includes **more than 39,300 homeless 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 **47 percent higher** than it was ten years ago. The number of homeless single adults is **116 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 unsheltered 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

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