

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 2021, there were **48,723 homeless people**, including **15,346 homeless children**, sleeping each night in New York City's main municipal shelter system. A near-record **18,370 single adults** slept in shelters each night in October 2021.
- Over the course of City fiscal year 2021, **107,510 different homeless adults and children** slept in the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter system. This includes **31,947 homeless children**.
- Families entering shelters predominantly come from a few clustered zip codes in the poorest neighborhoods in New York City. [3] However, homeless families and single adults **come from every community district in NYC prior to entering shelters**.
- The number of homeless New Yorkers sleeping each night in municipal shelters is now **20 percent higher** than it was ten years ago. The number of homeless single adults is **92 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 **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 4 percent are of unknown race/ethnicity.
- In City fiscal year 2021, the **average length of stay** in the DHS shelter system was 476 days for single adults, 520 days for families with children, and 773 days for adult families. [10]
- In November 2019, DHS estimated that 77 percent of adult families, 68 percent of single adults, and 53 percent of families with children sleeping in shelters **had at least one disability**. [11]

References

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