



The U.S. Department of  
Housing and Urban Development  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

# The 2021 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress



## PART 1: POINT-IN-TIME ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

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# Acknowledgements

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## Key Findings

**Because of pandemic-related disruptions to counts of unsheltered homeless people in January 2021, these findings focus on people experiencing sheltered homelessness.** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD encouraged communities to determine whether conducting an unsheltered PIT count posed a high risk of exacerbating COVID-19 transmissions, given the lack of widespread access to COVID-19 vaccines at the time. Many CoCs chose to not conduct an unsheltered PIT count because their capacity to conduct counts was limited due to other pandemic-response efforts and the risk of transmitting COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness, homeless assistance staff, and volunteers. There were 226 communities that conducted either complete or partial counts of unsheltered homelessness, but those communities are not representative of all communities across the United States.

**On a single night in 2021, more than 326,000 people were experiencing sheltered homelessness in the United States.** Six in ten were individuals—that is, people in households with only adults or in households with only children. Four in ten were people in families with children.

**The number of people staying in sheltered locations decreased by eight percent between 2020 and 2021.** While this continues a decline that began in 2015, the drop between 2020 and 2021 was steeper than those in recent years. A possible cause for sheltered reduction is that some emergency shelter providers increased the amount of space between people sleeping in congregate settings to reduce their risk of exposure, leading to fewer beds in congregate shelters. Other potential factors that led to the decrease: people's reluctance to use available shelter beds because of health risk, and eviction moratoria, and cash transfers that may have reduced inflow into homelessness. It appears that the unsheltered population did not increase within the communities that conducted unsheltered counts. However, trends on unsheltered homelessness are known for just over half of communities, which accounted for only 22 percent of unsheltered homelessness in 2020.

**The number of sheltered people in families with children declined considerably between 2020 and 2021, while the number of sheltered individuals remained relatively flat.** In 2021, just over 131,000 people in families with children were experiencing sheltered homelessness, a decline of 15 percent between since 2020. This was a much larger change than in the number of sheltered individuals, which dropped by only 2 percent, to 236,500 people in 2021. Some of the pandemic-related resources available through the CARES Act and other pandemic relief measures were more generous to families with children.

**Between 2020 and 2021, the reported emergency shelter and transitional housing inventory available for people experiencing homelessness remained relatively flat, but occupancy rates declined.** While the inventory reported by communities did not decline, only 73 percent of reported beds were occupied on the night of the count, compared with 82 percent in 2020. An even smaller percentage of facility-based beds were occupied in January 2021, 71 percent.

**The share of emergency shelter beds for people experiencing sheltered homelessness located in non-congregate settings increased by 134 percent.** In response to the pandemic, many communities focused their resources on shelter beds located in hotels, motels, or other settings that are not facility-based.

**Between 2020 and 2021, the number of sheltered veterans decreased by 10 percent.** This represents the largest one-year decline since 2015-2016. In 2021, 19,750 veterans were experiencing sheltered

homelessness, representing eight percent of all sheltered adults experiencing homelessness were veterans. Sheltered veterans accounted for 11 out of every 10,000 veterans in the country.

**On a single night in 2021, 15,763 people under the age of 25 experienced sheltered homelessness on their own as “unaccompanied youth.”** This represents a decline of nine percent between 2020 and 2021. While decreases in sheltered homelessness among unaccompanied youth were experienced across nearly all demographic characteristics, a few groups did experience increases. **The number of youth who were transgender increased by 29 percent, and the number of sheltered unaccompanied youth who were gender non-conforming increased by 26 percent.** Though the number was relatively small, sheltered unaccompanied youth who were **Native American experienced the largest percentage increase, at 21 percent.**

**The number of sheltered individuals identified as chronically homeless increased by 20 percent between 2020 and 2021.** This trend in the sheltered chronically homeless individual population runs counter to the decrease for all sheltered individuals. While the overall sheltered individual population has declined, the number of chronically homeless individuals staying in shelter programs has increased in recent years and continued to do so between 2020 and 2021.

## Definition of Terms

**Chronically Homeless Individual** refers to an individual with a disability who has been continuously homeless for one year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years where the combined length of time homeless on those occasions is at least 12 months.

**Chronically Homeless People in Families** refers to people in families in which the head of household has a disability and has either been continuously homeless for one year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years where the combined length of time homeless on those occasions is at least 12 months.

**Congregate Shelter** is an emergency shelter where the residents share a common sleeping area.

**Continuums of Care (CoC)** are local planning bodies responsible for coordinating the full range of homelessness services in a geographic area, which may cover a city, county, metropolitan area, or an entire state.

**Emergency Shelter** is a facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for homeless people.

**Facility-based Beds** refers to beds located at a specific site, or multiple sites, that are owned, operated, or sponsored by a homeless assistance provider for emergency shelter.

**Homeless** describes a person who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

**Housing Inventory Count (HIC)** is produced by each CoC and provides an annual inventory of beds that assist people in the CoC who are experiencing homelessness or leaving homelessness.

**Individual** refers to a person who is not part of a family with children during an episode of homelessness. Individuals may be homeless as single adults, unaccompanied youth, or in multiple-adult or multiple-child households.

**Non-congregate Shelter** is an emergency shelter that provides private sleeping space, such as a hotel or motel room.

**Occupancy Rate** is the percentage of available beds that are occupied on the night of the PIT count.

**Other Permanent Housing** is housing with or without services that is specifically for people who formerly experienced homelessness but that does not require people to have a disability.

**Parenting Youth** are people under age 25 who are the parents or legal guardians of one or more children (under age 18) who are present with or sleeping in the same place as that youth parent, where there is no person over age 24 in the household.

**Parenting Youth Household** is a household with at least one parenting youth and the child or children for whom the parenting youth is the parent or legal guardian.

**People in Families with Children** are people who are experiencing homelessness as part of a household that has at least one adult (age 18 and older) and one child (under age 18).

**Point-in-Time Counts** are unduplicated one-night estimates of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations. The one-night counts are conducted by CoCs nationwide and occur during the last week in January of each year.

**Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** is a housing model designed to provide housing assistance (project- and tenant-based) and supportive services on a long-term basis to people who formerly experienced homelessness. HUD's Continuum of Care program, authorized by the McKinney-Vento Act, funds PSH and requires that the client have a disability for eligibility.

**Rapid Rehousing** is a housing model designed to provide temporary housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness, moving them quickly out of homelessness and into permanent housing.

**Safe Havens** provide temporary shelter and services to hard-to-serve individuals.

**Sheltered Homelessness** refers to people who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens.

**Transitional Housing Programs** provide people experiencing homelessness a place to stay combined with supportive services for up to 24 months.

**Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (under 18)** are people in households with only children who are not part of a family with children or accompanied by their parent or guardian during their episode of homelessness, and who are under the age of 18.

**Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (18-24)** are people in households without children who are not part of a family with children or accompanied by their parent or guardian during their episode of homelessness and who are between the ages of 18 and 24.

**Unsheltered Homelessness** refers to people whose primary nighttime location is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for people (for example, the streets, vehicles, or parks).

**Veteran** refers to any person who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States. This includes Reserves and National Guard members who were called up to active duty.

# 1. Estimates of Sheltered Homelessness in the United States

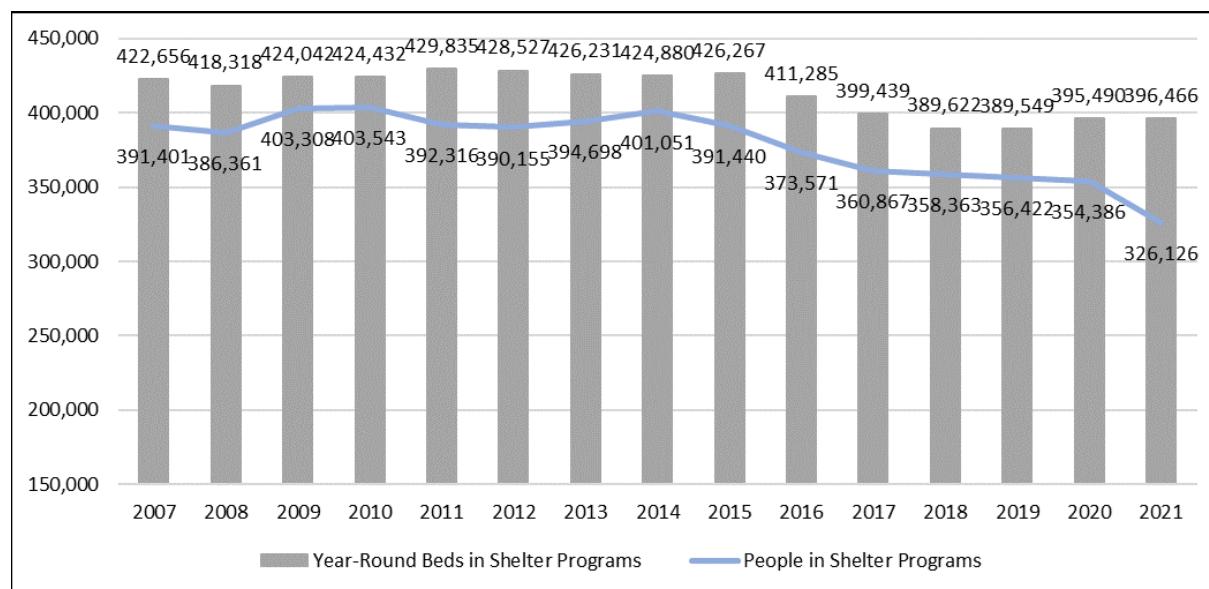
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD encouraged communities to determine whether conducting an unsheltered PIT count posed a high risk of exacerbating COVID-19 transmissions, given the lack of widespread access to COVID-19 vaccines at the time. If communities determined COVID-19 risks were too high *and* notified HUD that they would use the available waiver flexibility, HUD waived the requirement to conduct the unsheltered count in 2021. Communities that determined that unsheltered PIT counts could be conducted without increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, could notify HUD that they would use available waiver flexibility that waived some of the unsheltered homeless data collection requirements. As a result, in January of 2021, 150 communities, 39 percent of all communities, conducted full unsheltered counts (i.e., counts that included all data elements for both sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts). An additional 76 communities conducted a partial count in which total unsheltered counts were reported but not household or demographic characteristics.

All chapters in this report that provide statistically valid estimates of homelessness at a point in time in January will focus on the sheltered population. A separate chapter will explore the non-representative sample of communities that did conduct unsheltered counts.

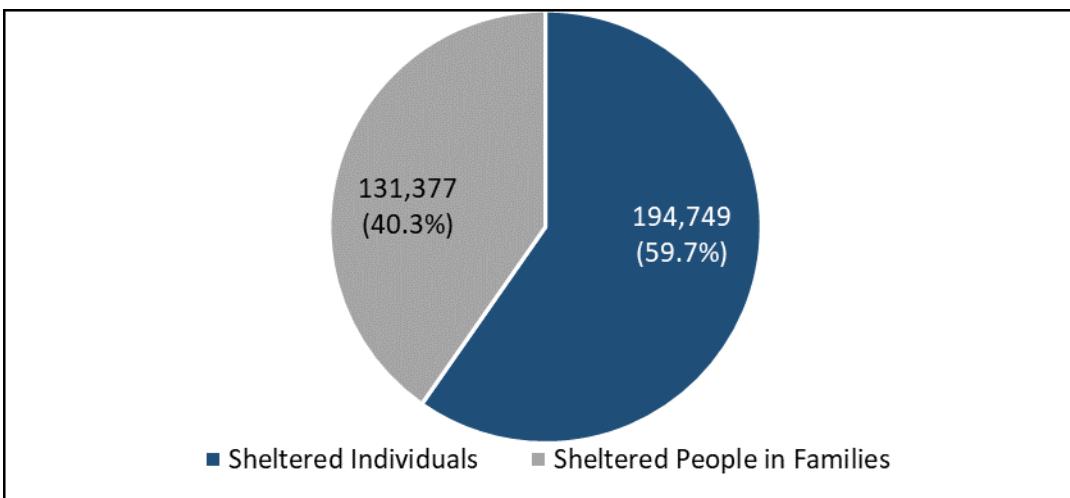
The pandemic also resulted in considerable changes to the capacity of homeless service providers. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, facility-based emergency shelters with congregate settings took measures to increase physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some cases, this reduced capacity was reported through the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), but in other communities it was not. Estimates of the number of people experiencing sheltered homelessness at a point in time in 2021 should be viewed with caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities or safety concerns regarding staying in shelters.

## 1.1 National Estimates of Sheltered Homelessness

**Exhibit 1-1 Sheltered Homelessness and Bed Availability, 2007-2021**



### **Exhibit 1-2. Sheltered Population by Household Type**



- In January of 2021, 326,126 people were experiencing sheltered homelessness, staying in emergency shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing programs.
- Six in ten people staying in sheltered programs on a single night in 2021 were in households without children present (i.e., individuals). Nearly four in ten were people in families with children. And less than one percent were children in households without an adult present.
- The pandemic required emergency shelters to allow an appropriate amount of space between people sleeping in congregate settings to reduce their risk of exposure. In response, many shelters, instead of serving all clients within a facility-based setting, focused their resources on different types of shelters. In 2021, nine percent of beds and 11 percent of people were served in non-congregate settings such as motel or hotel rooms. On the HIC, these are reported as “voucher beds.”

### **Exhibit 1-3. Changes in Sheltered Population, 2007-2021**

2020 to 2021	-28,260	-8.0%
2010 to 2021	-77,417	-19.2%
2007 to 2021	-65,275	-16.7%

### **Exhibit 1-4. Occupancy Rates of Programs for People in Sheltered Locations, 2020 and 2021**

	2020	2021
Total	82.1%	73.2%
ES	83.2%	73.7%
SH	85.9%	68.3%
TH	78.2%	71.5%

## Exhibit 1-5. Distribution of Emergency Shelter Bed by Type, 2020 and 2021



## Exhibit 1-6. Bed Inventory and Occupancy Rates by Bed Type

	Emergency Shelter Beds			People in Emergency Shelter Beds*			Occupancy Rates	
	2020	2021	Change	2020	2021	Change	2020	2021
Total ES Beds	336,618	356,940	6.0%	279,962	263,062	-6.0%	83.2%	73.7%
Facility-based beds	304,561	303,174	-0.5%	251,594	216,420	-16.3%	82.6%	71.4%
Other beds	17,825	20,507	15.0%	15,388	16,984	9.4%	86.3%	82.8%
Voucher beds	14,232	33,259	133.7%	12,980	29,658	56.2%	91.2%	89.2%

\*Data on people in emergency shelter beds as reported by communities on Housing Inventory Count data.

### Changes over Time

- While sheltered homelessness had been decreasing in recent years, the decline between January of 2020, before the onset of the pandemic in the United States, and January of 2021 was steeper than recent year to year declines. The number of people staying in sheltered locations declined by 8 percent (or 28,260 people). The sheltered population reported in 2021 was 19 percent lower than it was in 2010 and 17 percent lower than it was in 2007, when these data were first reported.
- Between 2020 and 2021, the reported inventory available for people experiencing homelessness remained relatively flat, increasing by only 976 beds. While reported inventory did not reduce, only 73 percent of beds reported by communities were occupied on the night of the count. This represents a reduction over 2020, when 82 percent of beds were occupied. An even smaller percentage of facility-based beds were occupied in January 2021, 71 percent compared with 83 percent of facility-based beds in 2020.
- The number of facility-based emergency shelter beds remained relatively flat, declining by less than one percent. However, the number of emergency shelter beds that were voucher-based more than doubled, increasing by 134 percent or 19,027 beds. “Other beds,” which are those located in churches or other facilities that are not dedicated to serving homelessness but that provide beds for people experiencing homelessness also increased, by 15 percent or 2,682 beds. Both increases likely resulted from community efforts to decompress shelters.

- The distribution of shelter beds also changed. The percentage of all emergency shelter beds located in a facility dropped from 91 percent to 85 percent, while the percentage of all beds that were voucher-based increased from four percent to nine percent.

## Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Population

**Exhibit 1-7. Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Population, 2021**

	Sheltered 2021 #	Sheltered 2021 %	Change 2020- 2021	Percentage Change
Total homeless	326,126	100%	-28,260	-8.0%
Age				
Under 18	80,656	24.7%	-15,057	-15.7%
18 to 24	25,628	7.9%	-2,585	-9.2%
Over 24	219,842	67.4%	-10,618	-4.6%
Gender				
Female	141,497	43.4%	-15,184	-9.7%
Male	182,673	56.0%	-13,125	-6.7%
Transgender	1,417	0.4%	5	0.4%
Gender Non-conforming	539	0.2%	100	22.8%
Ethnicity				
Non-Hispanic	252,968	77.6%	-24,110	-8.7%
Hispanic	73,158	22.4%	-4,139	-5.4%
Race				
White	144,707	44.4%	-6,933	-4.6%
Black	147,521	45.2%	-19,684	-11.8%
Asian	3,829	1.2%	-7	-0.2%
Native American	7,943	2.4%	-163	-2.0%
Pacific Islander	4,629	1.4%	421	10.0%
Multiple Races	17,497	5.4%	-1,883	-9.7%

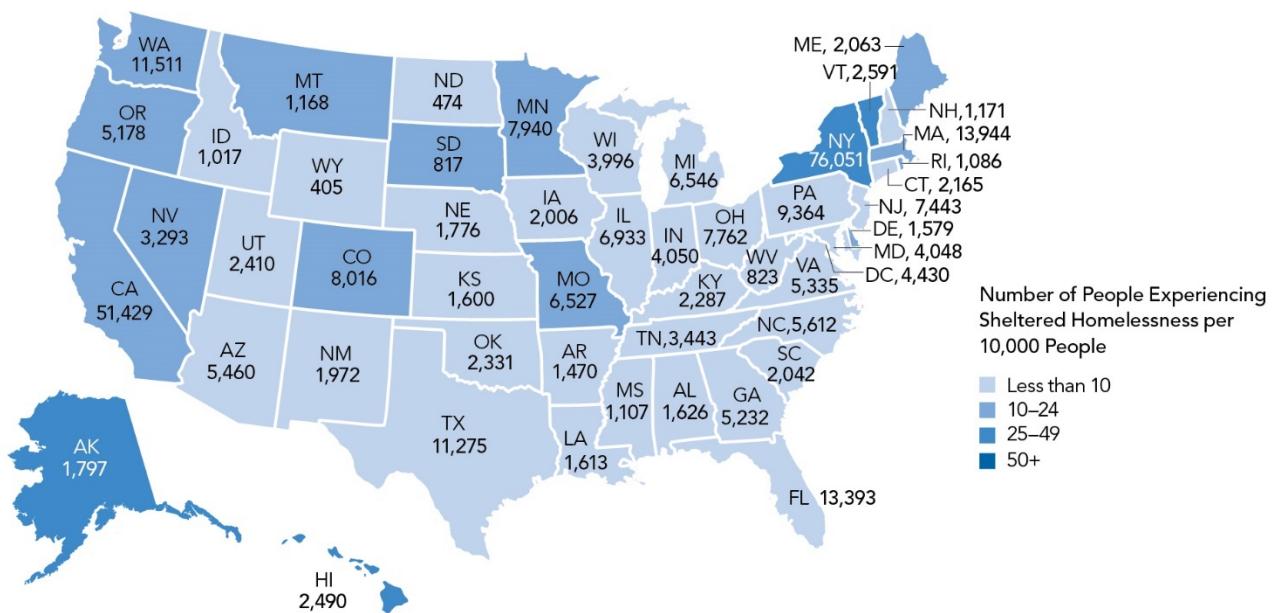
- The demographic characteristics of people experiencing homelessness in sheltered locations varied considerably by household type. See Section 2 on the characteristics of individuals and Section 3 on the characteristics of people in families with children.
- Across all people staying in sheltered locations on a single night in 2021, one-quarter were children under the age of 18. Eight percent were youth aged 18 to 24, and 68 percent were people aged 25 or older.
- The gender characteristics of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness reflect the higher percentage of men in the sheltered individual homeless population. More than half (56%) of people experiencing sheltered homelessness were men or boys (182,673 people), 43 percent were women or girls (141,497 people), and less than one percent were transgender (1,417 people) or gender-nonconforming (539 people).
- More than 4 of every 10 people experiencing sheltered homelessness were Black or African American (45% or 147,521), and 44 percent (or 144,707 people) were White. The remaining 10 percent were people identifying multiple races (5%), Native American or Indigenous Peoples (2%), Asian (1%), or Pacific Islander (1%).
- Less than one-quarter of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness, 22 percent, were Hispanic or Latino (counting people of all races who identify as Hispanic or Latino).

## Changes in Demographic Characteristics of All People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness

- Decreases in sheltered homelessness were experienced across demographic characteristics, with few exceptions. Among age groups, children had the largest percentage decline, with 16 percent fewer children in the sheltered population in 2021 than in 2020.
- People in shelters who were men or boys declined by seven percent, while the number of people in sheltered locations who were women or girls decreased by 10 percent. The number of people who were transgender increased by less than one percent (or 5 people), while the number of people who were gender non-conforming staying in sheltered locations increased by 23 percent (or 100 people).
- Between 2020 and 2021, the number of people experiencing sheltered homelessness who were White decreased by five percent, and the number of Black or African American people staying in shelters decreased by 12 percent. People who were of more than one race decreased by 10 percent. While the number was relatively small, the number of people who were Pacific Islander increased by 10 percent (or 421 people).
- The number of Hispanic or Latino people experiencing sheltered homelessness decreased by 5 percent, while the number of non-Hispanic/non-Latino people declined by nine percent.

## 1.2 State-Level Estimates of Sheltered Homelessness

### Exhibit 1-8. Sheltered Estimates by State, 2021



### **On a Single Night in January 2021**

- Nearly half of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness in the country were in four states: New York (23% or 76,051 people); California (16% or 51,429 people); Massachusetts (4% or 13,944 people); and Florida (4% or 13,393).
- Looking at the inventory of shelter beds by state, it is not surprising that the five states that accounted for the largest shares of beds for people experiencing sheltered homelessness included the four states with the largest number of sheltered people. Nearly half of all shelter beds were in five states: New York (19% or 86,114 beds), California (16% or 72,161 beds), Texas (5% or 19,972 beds), Florida (4% or 18,727 beds), and Massachusetts (4% or 18,186 beds).
- All five states with the highest occupancy rates on the night of the point-in-time count were in colder climates. New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Oregon, and Rhode Island all had occupancy rates exceeding 80 percent and above the national average of 73 percent. New York had the highest rate, with 88 percent of shelter beds occupied on the night of the count.
- Three of the five states with the lowest occupancy rates (Mississippi, West Virginia, and Wyoming) reported less than half of beds occupied on the night of the count. Arkansas and New Mexico also had low occupancy rates, with state averages of 55 percent of beds occupied.

### **Exhibit 1-9. Highest and Lowest Occupancy Rates by State, 2021**

<b>Highest Occupancy Rates</b>	
New York	88.3%
New Jersey	84.7%
Vermont	83.9%
Oregon	82.4%
Rhode Island	82.3%

<b>Lowest Occupancy Rates</b>	
Mississippi	47.5%
West Virginia	48.3%
Wyoming	49.6%
Arkansas	54.6%
New Mexico	54.7%

### **Exhibit 1-10. Largest Changes in Sheltered Population by State, 2007-2021**

Change 2020-2021			Change 2007-2021		
State	#	%	State	#	%
<b>Largest Increases</b>					
CA	3,541	7.4%	NY	18,770	32.8%
VT	1,595	160.1%	CA	2,918	6.0%
CO	1,083	15.6%	VT	1,871	259.9%
NV	602	22.4%	CO	1,045	15.0%
DE	564	55.6%	DE	725	84.9%
<b>Largest Decreases<sup>a</sup></b>					
NY	-10,663	-12.3%	TX	-11,607	-50.7%
TX	-2,742	-19.6%	NJ	-7,393	-49.8%
MA	-2,737	-16.4%	FL	-7,136	-34.8%
PA	-2,154	-18.7%	PA	-5,377	-36.5%
FL	-1,422	-9.6%	WA	-5,346	-31.7%
<b>Note:</b> Excludes Puerto Rico and U.S. territories.					

### ***Changes over Time***

- Fourteen states reported increases in the number of people staying in shelter between 2020 and 2021. The largest absolute increases in sheltered homelessness were in California (3,541), Vermont (1,595), and Colorado (1083). States with the largest percentage increases were in Vermont (160%), Delaware (56%), and Arkansas (35%).
- Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia reported decreases in the number of people staying in sheltered locations. The largest absolute declines were reported by CoCs in New York (10,663), Texas (2,742), and Massachusetts (2,737). The largest percentage decreases were in Mississippi (38%), Kentucky (26%), Tennessee (23%), West Virginia (23%), and the District of Columbia (23%).
- Between 2020 and 2021, the number of beds for people experiencing homelessness decreased in 24 states and the District of Columbia. The largest absolute decreases in inventory were in New York (5,793 fewer beds) and Pennsylvania (1018 fewer beds). The largest percentage decreases in the inventory were in Oklahoma (19% less beds), Louisiana (18% less beds), and Alabama (17% less beds).
- The number of beds reported as available for people experiencing homelessness in 2021 increased in 26 states. The largest absolute increases were experienced in California (14,418 more beds), Vermont (1,708 more beds), Minnesota (1,520), Texas (1,368), and Colorado (1,327). The largest percentage increases in inventory occurred in Vermont (124% more beds), Arkansas (58%), and Delaware (52%).
- Between 2007 and 2020, the number of people experiencing sheltered homelessness increased in only 12 states. The largest absolute increase was in NY, with 18,770 more people (or 33%) experiencing sheltered homelessness in 2021 than in 2007. The largest percent increase was in Vermont, where sheltered homelessness increased by 260 percent (or 1,871 people).
- Texas experienced the largest absolute decline in sheltered homelessness between 2007 and 2021 with 11,607 fewer people (or 51%). New Jersey and Florida also had large declines, with 7,393 and 7,136 fewer people experiencing sheltered homelessness in 2021 than in 2007. Virginia and Kentucky had the largest percentage declines over the same time period at 62 percent in both states.

## **1.3 CoC-Level Estimates of Sheltered Homelessness**

### ***Continuums of Care (CoC) were Divided into Four Geographic Categories***

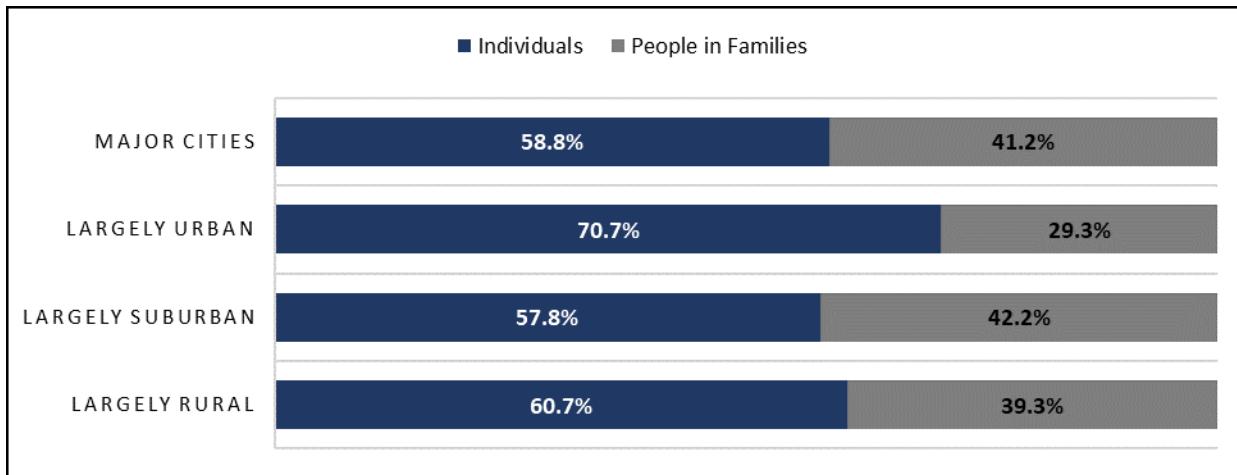
- (1) Major city CoCs (n=48) cover the CoCs that contain one of the 50 largest cities in the United States. In two cases (Phoenix and Mesa, AZ, and Arlington and Fort Worth, TX), two large cities were located in the same CoC.
- (2) Other Largely Urban CoCs (n= 59) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in an urbanized area within a principal city within the CoC (but excludes the nation's largest cities).
- (3) Largely Suburban CoCs (n= 167) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in suburban areas, defined as urbanized areas outside of a principal city or urban clusters within 10 miles of urbanized areas.
- (4) Largely Rural CoCs (n= 109) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in urban clusters that are more than 10 miles from an urbanized area or in Census-defined rural territories.

***Note: These definitions have been adapted from definitions used by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics to characterize the locations of schools.***

**Exhibit 1-11. Sheltered Homelessness by Geographic Category**

	Number of CoCs	People in Sheltered Locations	Distribution across CoC Type
Total	383	325,422	100
Major Cities	48	169,242	52.0%
Other Urban CoCs	59	22,892	7.0%
Suburban CoCs	166	79,826	24.5%
Rural CoCs	109	53,131	16.3%

**Exhibit 1-12. Percentage of People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness by Household Type and CoC Category, 2021**



***On a Single Night in January 2021***

- Slightly more than half of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness (52%) were in one of the nation's 50 largest cities. One-quarter of people experiencing homelessness were in a predominantly suburban CoC (25%), 16 percent were in largely rural CoCs, and the remainder (7%) were in largely urban CoCs that do not contain one of the 50 largest cities.
- One out of every five people experiencing sheltered homelessness in the United States did so in New York City.
- CoCs that were largely urban but did not contain one of the nation's largest cities had the highest percent of individuals among the sheltered population (71%). Largely rural CoCs had the highest percentage of people in sheltered locations who were in families with children (42%).
- Largely suburban CoCs had the highest occupancy rates among shelter programs, with 85 percent of beds reported as occupied. Rural CoCs had the lowest occupancy rate, with 78 percent of all beds for people experiencing homelessness occupied on the night of the count.

**Exhibit 1-13. Occupancy Rates by Geographic Category**

Geographic Category	Occupancy Rate
Major Cities	84.8%
Other Urban CoCs	81.4%
Suburban CoCs	85.1%
Rural CoCs	77.5%

**Exhibit 1-14. CoCs with the Largest Number of People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness by Geographic Category, 2021**

CoC Name	People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness, 2021	CoC Name	People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness, 2021
<b>Major Cities</b>		<b>Other Largely Urban CoCs</b>	
New York City	65,975	Saint Paul/Ramsey County, MN	1,558
Los Angeles City & County , CA	17,225	St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Largo/Pinellas County, FL	1,305
Metropolitan Denver, CO	5,530	Anchorage, AK	1,167
Seattle/King County, WA	5,183	Spokane City & County, WA	992
District of Columbia	4,430	Oxnard, San Buenaventura/Ventura County, CA	949
<b>Largely Suburban CoCs</b>		<b>Largely Rural CoCs</b>	
Nassau, Suffolk Counties , NY	2,912	Washington Balance of State	3,462
Massachusetts Balance of State	2,772	Texas Balance of State	2,562
Santa Ana, Anaheim/Orange County, CA	2,441	Indiana Balance of State	2,385
Springfield/Hampden County, MA	2,218	Ohio Balance of State	2,336
Honolulu City and County, HI	1,854	Wisconsin Balance of State	2,291

**Exhibit 1-15 Change in Sheltered Homelessness and Bed Inventory by Geographic Category, 2020-2021**

	Change in sheltered homelessness, from 2020 to 2021	Percent change in sheltered homelessness, from 2020 to 2021	Change in shelter inventory, 2020 to 2021	Percent change in shelter inventory, 2020 to 2021
Total	-28,231	-8.0%	-317	-0.1%
Major Cities	-14,117	-7.7%	1,036	0.5%
Other Urban CoCs	-2,454	-9.7%	-1,006	-3.6%
Suburban CoCs	-8,271	-9.4%	2,104	2.2%
Rural CoCs	-3,720	-6.5%	-1,701	-2.3%

***Changes over Time***

- The number of people experiencing sheltered homelessness decreased in all geographic categories between 2020 and 2021. The largest decreases occurred in other largely urban CoCs – those without one of the nation’s largest cities – with 10 percent fewer people in sheltered locations. Largely rural CoCs had the smallest change in the sheltered population, with a decrease of 7 percent between 2020 and 2021.
- Other urban CoCs also experienced the largest percentage decline in shelter beds between 2020 and 2021 (1,007 fewer beds or 4%). Largely rural areas had the largest absolute decline in shelter beds, with 1,701 fewer beds (or 2%). Largely suburban areas reported two percent more beds (or 2,104 beds) while inventory in major city CoCs remained relatively flat.

## 2. Estimates of Sheltered Individuals in the United States

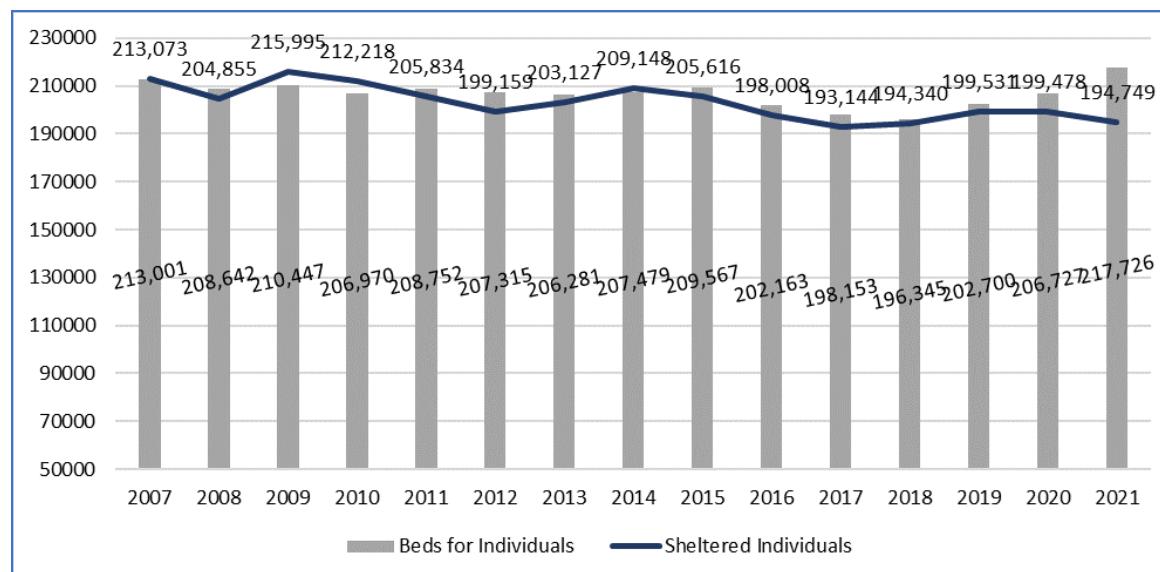
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD encouraged communities to determine whether conducting an unsheltered PIT count posed a high risk of exacerbating COVID-19 transmissions, given the lack of widespread access to COVID-19 vaccines at the time. If communities determined COVID-19 risks were too high *and* notified HUD that they would use the available waiver flexibility, HUD waived the requirement to conduct the unsheltered count in 2021. Communities that determined that unsheltered PIT counts could be conducted without increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, could notify HUD that they would use available waiver flexibility that waived some of the unsheltered homeless data collection requirements. As a result, in January of 2021, 150 communities, 39 percent of all communities, conducted full unsheltered counts (i.e., counts that included all data elements for both sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts). An additional 76 communities conducted a partial count in which total unsheltered counts were reported but not household or demographic characteristics.

All chapters in this report that provide statistically valid estimates of homelessness at a point in time in January will focus on the sheltered population. A separate chapter will explore the non-representative sample of communities that did conduct unsheltered counts.

The pandemic also resulted in considerable changes to the capacity of homeless service providers. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, facility-based emergency shelters with congregate settings took measures to increase physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some cases, this reduced capacity was reported through the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), but in other communities it was not. Estimates of the number of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness at a point in time in 2021 should be viewed with caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities or safety concerns regarding staying in shelters.

### 2.1 National Estimates of Sheltered Individuals

Exhibit 2-1: PIT Estimates of Sheltered Homeless Individuals, 2007-2021



**Exhibit 2-2: Change in Numbers of Sheltered Homeless Individuals and Beds for Individuals, 2007-2021**

Changes in Sheltered Individuals, 2007-2021			Changes in Beds for Individuals, 2007-2021	
	#	%	#	%
2020 to 2021	-4,729	-2.4%	10,905	5.4%
2010 to 2021	-17,469	-8.2%	10,759	5.2%
2007 to 2021	-18,324	-8.6%	1,592	0.7%

**Exhibit 2-3: Emergency Shelter Beds for Individuals by Bed Type, 2020 and 2021**

Bed Type	Emergency Shelter Beds by Type, 2021		Emergency Shelter Beds by Type, 2020	
	#	%	#	%
Total Beds for Individuals	168,521	100.0%	155,402	100.0%
Facility-based Beds	156,007	92.6%	150,394	96.8%
Other Beds	4,437	2.6%	3,233	2.1%
Voucher Beds	8,077	4.8%	1,775	1.1%

***On a Single Night in January 2021***

- The sheltered population included 194,749 homeless individuals—that is, people in households that did not include both adults and children. Individuals were 60 percent of the total sheltered homeless population.
- On the same night, communities reported 217,684 beds available to people experiencing homelessness as individuals. Of those, 77 percent (or 168,521 beds) were in emergency shelter programs, 22 percent (or 46,687 beds) were in transitional housing programs, and the remaining one percent (2,476 beds) were in safe haven programs.
- Most emergency shelter beds for individuals (93%) were in facility-based settings, while five percent were considered “voucher beds”—that is, beds in scattered-site settings such as hotels or motels. The remaining three percent were in other locations such as faith-based or private organizations that are not part of the formal shelter system.

***Changes in Sheltered Individual Homelessness over Time***

- Between 2020 and 2021, the number of individuals staying in sheltered locations decreased by two percent (4,729 fewer people). The decline in the number of individuals in sheltered locations was far outpaced by the decline in people in families with children in shelters (15%), which is discussed in Section 3.
- Despite nationwide efforts to decompress shelter capacity to address the safety of people during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of beds for adult only households reported by communities in January 2021 was five percent (or 10,905 beds) greater in 2021 than in 2020 and the highest number since data collection began. This is surprising and could result from failure of some communities to report declines in beds that occurred between 2020 and 2021. Part of the explanation could be that the shift from congregate to voucher beds, which rose from one to five percent of all beds, did not result in a net decrease in overall shelter beds, as sufficient vouchers beds were found to replace the lost congregate beds. In addition, with a substantial decline in the sheltered family population between

2020 and 2021, some communities may have redefined beds for family members as beds for individuals rather than taking those beds out of the inventory.

- Over a longer period, 2007 to 2021, individuals staying in sheltered locations declined by nine percent (18,324 fewer people), while the number of beds for adult only households remained flat (increasing by less than 1% or 1,592 beds).

#### **Exhibit 2-4: Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless Individuals, 2021**

	Sheltered Individuals		Change in Sheltered Individuals, 2020-2021	
	#	%	#	%
Total homeless	194,749	100.0%	-4,729	-2.4%
<b>Age</b>				
Under 18	1,471	0.8%	-340	-18.8%
18 to 24	15,933	8.2%	-1,299	-7.5%
Over 24	177,345	91.1%	-3,090	-1.7%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	61,176	31.4%	-787	-1.3%
Male	131,784	67.7%	-4,082	-3.0%
Gender Non-conforming	414	0.2%	108	35.3%
Transgender	1,375	0.7%	32	2.4%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic/Latino	32,404	16.6%	985	3.1%
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	162,345	83.4%	-5,714	-3.4%
<b>Race</b>				
Asian American	2,607	1.3%	241	10.2%
Black or African American	78,247	40.2%	-3,179	-3.9%
Multiple Races	8,519	4.4%	-848	-9.1%
Pacific Islander	2,221	1.1%	247	12.5%
Native American	5,143	2.6%	88	1.7%
White	98,012	50.3%	-1,278	-1.3%

#### ***Demographic Characteristics of Individual Sheltered Homelessness***

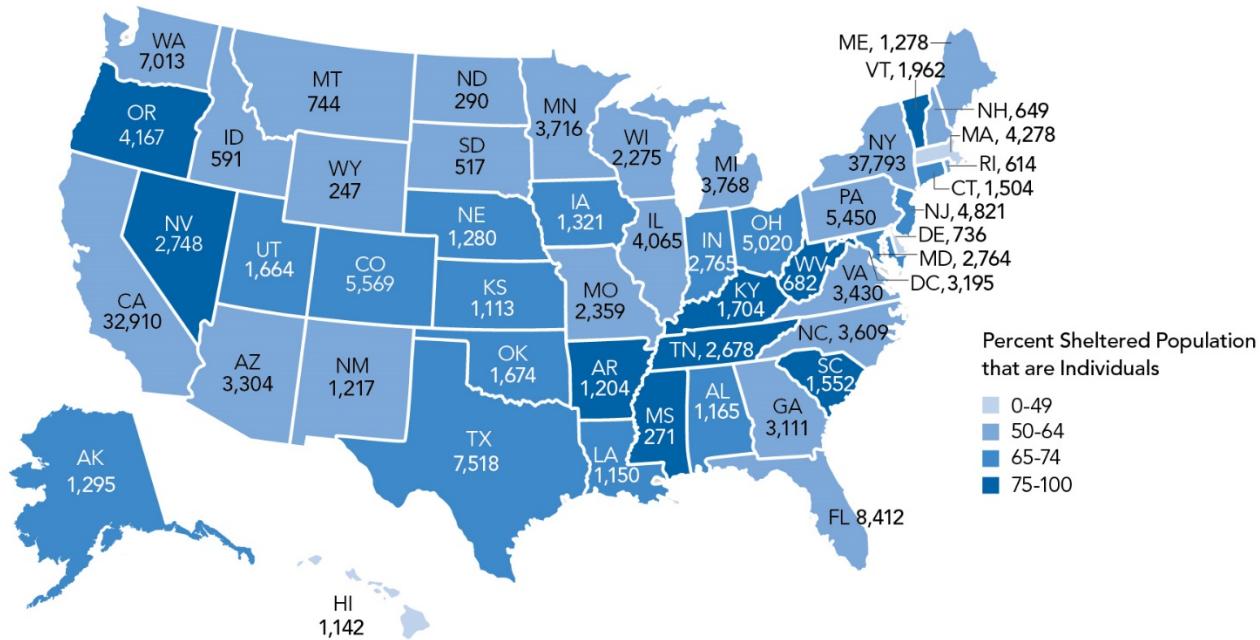
- The typical person staying in a shelter as an individual in 2021 was 25 years of age or older (91%), a man (68%), and identified his race as White (50%) and his ethnicity as non-Hispanic/non-Latino (83%).
- Very few people staying in a shelter as an individual were children under 18 years old, just one percent or 1,471 people.
- Just over three in ten individuals were women (31%), and one percent of individuals were transgender or gender non-conforming.
- Half of all people staying in shelters as individuals identified their race as White (50%), and about four in ten (40%), identified as Black or African American. The remaining 10 percent identified as Native American (3%), Asian (1%), Pacific Islander (1%), or were of multiple races (4%).

### ***Changes in Demographics over Time***

- Declines in the sheltered individual population were driven by declines among Black or African American men who were over the age of 24.
- The number of sheltered individuals in all age categories decreased from 2020 to 2021. The largest absolute decrease was for individuals over 24 years old, while the largest percentage decrease was for individuals under the age of 18.
- The number of individual men staying in shelters dropped by 4,082, while the number of women dropped by just 787.
- While the overall number of sheltered individuals decreased between 2020 and 2021, the number of Hispanic individuals in shelters rose by 3 percent (985 individuals). The number of non-Hispanic individuals dropped by 3 percent (5,714 individuals).
- Not all populations experienced declines. The numbers of individuals who identified as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native American increased between 2020 and 2021, as did those who identified as gender non-conforming or transgender.

## **2.2 State-Level Estimates of Individual Homelessness**

**Exhibit 2-5: Estimates of Sheltered Individuals by State, 2021**



### ***On a Single Night in January 2021***

- Nearly half of all individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness in the country were in five states: New York (19% or 37,793 individuals), California (17% or 32,910 individuals), Florida (4% or 8,412), Texas (4% or 7,518), and Washington (4% or 7,013).

### Exhibit 2-6: Largest Changes in Sheltered Homeless Individuals by State, 2007-2021

Change 2020-2021			Change 2007-2021		
State	#	%	State	#	%
<b>Largest Increases</b>					
<b>CA</b>	4,664	16.5%	<b>NY</b>	14,886	65.0%
<b>VT</b>	1,331	210.9%	<b>CO</b>	2,515	82.4%
<b>CO</b>	739	15.3%	<b>CA</b>	2,413	7.9%
<b>MN</b>	695	23.0%	<b>VT</b>	1,582	416.3%
<b>NV</b>	535	24.2%	<b>MN</b>	1,535	70.4%
<b>Largest Decreases</b>					
<b>PA</b>	-1,371	-20.1%	<b>TX</b>	-5,601	-42.7%
<b>NY</b>	-939	-2.4%	<b>FL</b>	-4,360	-34.1%
<b>TX</b>	-891	-10.6%	<b>MI</b>	-3,199	-45.9%
<b>OH</b>	-806	-13.8%	<b>MA</b>	-2,901	-40.4%
<b>NC</b>	-803	-18.2%	<b>GA</b>	-2,632	-45.8%

Data source: PIT 2007-2021

Note: Excludes Puerto Rico and U.S. territories.

#### *Changes over Time*

- The number of individuals staying in shelters decreased in more than half of all states between 2020 and 2021, 35 states and the District of Columbia. The states with the largest absolute decreases were Pennsylvania (1,371 sheltered individuals) and New York (939 sheltered individuals). The state with the largest percentage decrease was Kentucky (24%).
- The state with the largest percentage increase in individuals staying in shelters was Vermont (211%). California experienced the largest absolute increase in the number of individuals staying in shelters, with 4,664 more sheltered individuals in California in 2021 than 2020 – a 17 percent rise.

### 2.3 CoC-Level Estimates of Individual Homelessness

#### *Continuums of Care (CoC) were divided into four geographic categories*

- (1) Major city CoCs (n=48) are CoCs that contain one of the 50 largest cities in the United States. In two cases, Phoenix and Mesa, AZ, and Arlington and Fort Worth, TX, two of the largest US cities are located in the same CoC.
- (2) Other largely urban CoCs (n=59) are CoCs in which the population lives predominately in an urbanized area within the CoC's principal city or cities, but the CoCs does not include one of the nation's 50 largest cities.
- (3) Largely suburban CoCs (n=166) are CoCs in which the population lives predominately in suburban areas, defined as urbanized areas outside of a principal city or urban clusters within 10 miles of urbanized areas.
- (4) Largely rural CoCs (n=109) are CoCs in which the population lives predominantly in urban clusters that are more than 10 miles from an urbanized area or in Census-defined rural areas.

*Note: These definitions have been adapted from definitions used by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics to characterize the locations of schools.*

**Exhibit 2-7: Share of Homeless Individuals in each CoC Category by Sheltered Status, 2020**

	Number of CoCs	Individuals in Sheltered Locations	Distribution across CoC Type
<b>Total</b>	383	194,304	100.0%
<b>Major Cities</b>	48	99,518	51.2%
<b>Other Urban CoCs</b>	59	16,176	8.3%
<b>Suburban CoCs</b>	167	46,373	23.9%
<b>Rural CoCs</b>	109	32,237	16.6%

**Exhibit 2-8: CoCs with the Largest Numbers of Sheltered Homeless Individuals by CoC Category, 2021**

CoC Name	Sheltered Individuals	CoC Name	Sheltered Individuals
<b>Major City CoCs</b>		<b>Other Largely Urban CoCs</b>	
New York City	32,357	Saint Paul/Ramsey County, MN	1,021
Los Angeles City & County, CA	8,783	St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Largo/Pinellas County, FL	933
Metropolitan Denver, CO	3,982	Anchorage, AK	905
San Francisco, CA	3,411	Reno, Sparks/Washoe County, NV	736
District of Columbia	3,195	Spokane City & County, WA	732
<b>Largely Suburban CoCs</b>		<b>Largely Rural CoCs</b>	
Santa Ana, Anaheim/Orange County, CA	1,398	Washington Balance of State	2,072
Salt Lake City & County, UT	1,291	Indiana Balance of State	1,501
Newark/Essex County, NJ	1,250	Texas Balance of State	1,366
Connecticut Balance of State	1,179	Vermont Balance of State	1,347
Cleveland/Cuyahoga County, OH	1,170	Maine Statewide	1,278

***On a Single Night in January 2020***

- More than half of all individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness (51%) did so in one of the country's largest cities. Nearly one-quarter of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness (24%) were in largely suburban areas, and 17 percent were in largely rural areas.
- New York City had by far the largest number of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness, 32,357 people, followed by Los Angeles, with 8,783 people.

**Exhibit 2-9: Change in Individual Sheltered Homelessness by Geographic Category, 2020-2021**

	Change in individual sheltered homelessness, from 2020 to 2021	Percent change in individual sheltered homelessness, from 2020 to 2021
Major Cities	862	0.9%
Other Urban CoCs	-1,299	-7.4%
Suburban CoCs	-2,825	-5.7%
Rural CoCs	-1,388	-4.1%

***Changes over Time by CoC Category***

- Sheltered homelessness among individuals decreased across all CoC categories except for major cities, where 862 more individuals were in shelters in 2021 than in 2020, an increase of just one percent.
- The largest absolute decrease was in suburban CoCs, where 2,825 fewer individuals were counted in 2021 than in 2020, a decrease of 6 percent.

### 3. Estimates of Sheltered Homeless Families with Children in the United States

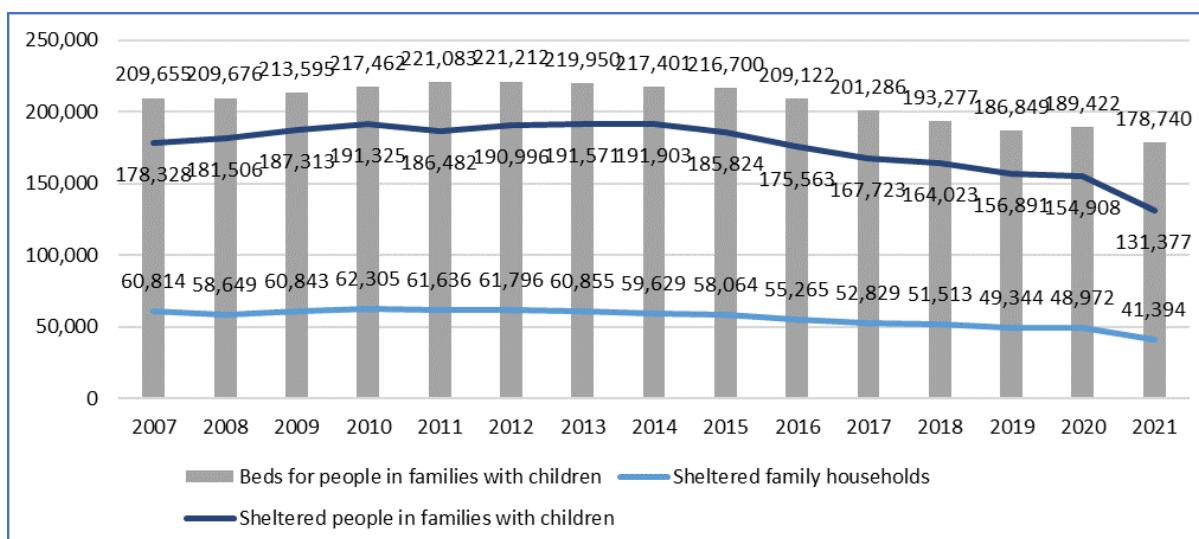
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD encouraged communities to determine whether conducting an unsheltered PIT count posed a high risk of exacerbating COVID-19 transmissions, given the lack of widespread access to COVID-19 vaccines at the time. If communities determined COVID-19 risks were too high *and* notified HUD that they would use the available waiver flexibility, HUD waived the requirement to conduct the unsheltered count in 2021. Communities that determined that unsheltered PIT counts could be conducted without increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, could notify HUD that they would use available waiver flexibility that waived some of the unsheltered homeless data collection requirements. As a result, in January of 2021, 150 communities, 39 percent of all communities, conducted full unsheltered counts (i.e., counts that included all data elements for both sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts). An additional 76 communities conducted a partial count in which total unsheltered counts were reported but not household or demographic characteristics.

All chapters in this report that provide statistically valid estimates of homelessness at a point in time in January will focus on the sheltered population. A separate chapter will explore the non-representative sample of communities that did conduct unsheltered counts.

The pandemic also resulted in considerable changes to the capacity of homeless service providers. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, facility-based emergency shelters with congregate settings took measures to increase physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some cases, this reduced capacity was reported through the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), but in other communities it was not. Estimates of the number of people in families with children experiencing sheltered homelessness at a point in time in 2021 should be viewed with caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities or safety concerns regarding staying in shelters.

#### 3.1 National Estimates of Sheltered Homeless Families with Children

**Exhibit 3-1 PIT Estimates of Sheltered Homeless People in Families with Children and Beds for People in Families with Children, 2007-2021**



**Exhibit 3-2. Distribution of Emergency Shelter Beds for People in Families with Children, by Type**

	Emergency Shelter Beds				Distribution of Beds for Families 2020	Distribution of Beds for Families 2021
	2020	2021	Change	Pct Change	%	%
Total ES Beds	145,758	139,199	-6,559	-4.5%	100.0%	100.0%
Facility-based beds	129,798	119,359	-10,439	-8.0%	89.1%	85.7%
Other beds	7,588	7,992	404	5.3%	5.2%	5.7%
Voucher beds	8,372	11,848	3,476	41.5%	5.7%	8.5%

***On a Single Night in January 2021***

- 131,377 people experienced sheltered homelessness as part of a family with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18.
- The average family size was 3.2 people, and about 41,000 family households were experiencing sheltered homelessness.
- In 2021, communities reported many more beds for people in families with children, a total of 178,740 beds. The pandemic required emergency shelters to allow an appropriate amount of space between people sleeping in congregate settings to reduce their risk of exposure. Although communities were asked to report the actual availability of beds on the night of the point-in-time count, accounting for the decompression of programs to increase safety, communities may not have reported all reductions. Thus, fewer than 178,740 shelter beds may actually have been available to families with children on a single night in January 2021.
- In response to the pandemic, many communities, instead of serving most clients within facility-based settings, focused their resources on different types of shelters. In 2021, nine percent of beds for families with children were in non-congregate settings such as motel or hotel rooms. On the HIC, these are reported as “voucher beds.” However, most beds for families with children – 86 percent – were in facility-based settings.

**Exhibit 3-3. Change in Sheltered People in Families with Children and Beds Available for People in Families, 2007-2021**

	Change in Number of Sheltered Homeless People in Families with Children, 2007-2021		Change in the Number of Beds Available to People in Families with Children	
	#	%	#	%
2020 to 2021	-23,531	-15.2%	-10,682	-5.6%
2007 to 2021	-46,951	-26.3%	-30,915	-14.7%

**Changes in Family Sheltered Homelessness over Time**

- The overall number of people in families with children who were experiencing sheltered homelessness on a single night declined by 15 percent between 2020 and 2021 (or 23,531 fewer people). This was a much larger change than in the number of sheltered individuals, which dropped by only 2 percent.
- The recent decline in the number of sheltered people in families with children continued a steady trend that began in 2014, with the number decreasing each year since. However, the 15 percent decline between 2020 and 2021 is larger than prior year-to-year declines possibly reflecting the effect of the eviction moratorium, the Economic Impact Payments, and other safety net benefits (e.g.

unemployment insurance) put in place in response to the pandemic. Those policies likely protected many families that otherwise would have fallen into homelessness and entered shelters as of January 2021.

- Between 2020 and 2021, the number of shelter beds reported on the HIC for people in families with children declined by 11,590 beds or 6 percent.
- In 2021, the number of sheltered families with children was 26 percent lower than it was in 2007 (or 46,951 fewer people).

**Exhibit 3-4: Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless People in Families with Children, 2021**

	Sheltered 2021	Sheltered 2020	Sheltered change	Sheltered percent change
	131,377	154,908	-23,531	-15.2%
<b>Age</b>				
Under 18	79,185	93,902	-14,717	-15.7%
18 to 24	9,695	10,981	-1,286	-11.7%
Over 24	42,497	50,025	-7,528	-15.0%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	80,321	94,718	-14,397	-15.2%
Male	50,889	59,932	-9,043	-15.1%
Transgender	42	69	-27	-39.1%
Gender Non-conforming	125	133	-8	-6.0%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic	40,754	45,878	-5,124	-11.2%
Non-Hispanic	90,623	109,019	-18,396	-16.9%
<b>Race</b>				
Asian	1,222	1,470	-248	-16.9%
Black or African American	69,274	85,779	-16,505	-19.2%
Multiple Races	8,978	10,013	-1,035	-10.3%
Native American	2,800	3,051	-251	-8.2%
Pacific Islander	2,408	2,234	174	7.8%
White	46,695	52,350	-5,655	-10.8%

**Exhibit 3-5 Sheltered Parenting Youth Households, 2021**

	2021	# Change 2020-2021	% Change 2020-2021
Total People in Sheltered Parenting Youth Households	12,860	-2,685	-17.3%
Total Sheltered Parenting Youth (<25)	5,775	-1,030	-15.1%
Sheltered Parenting Youth Under 18	61	-37	-37.8%
Sheltered Parenting Youth Age 18 to 24	5,714	-993	-14.8%
Sheltered Children of Parenting Youth	7,419	-1,655	-18.9%

### ***Demographic Characteristics of Family Sheltered Homelessness***

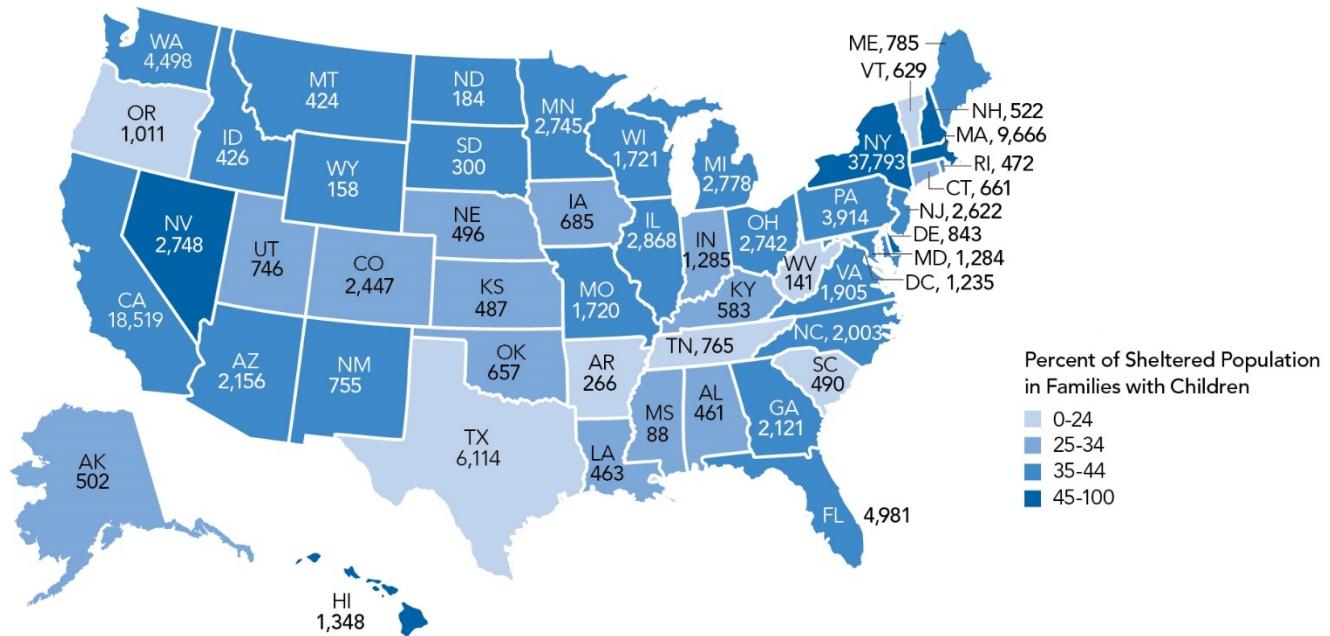
- Children under the age of 18 made up 60 percent of people experiencing sheltered homelessness in families in 2021. Another 32 percent were adults over the age of 24, and seven percent were young adults between 18 and 24 years of age.
- Six in 10 people in families in shelters were women and girls, and about four in 10 were men and boys.
- Nearly a third of people in families with children experiencing sheltered homelessness were Hispanic/Latino (31% or 40,754 people).
- Just over half of people in families experiencing sheltered homelessness (53%) were Black or African American. Just over a third (36%) were White, with the remaining 12 percent identifying as another race or multiple races.
- Ten percent of sheltered people in families with children were in parenting youth households where the head of household was under the age of 24. The average household size of parenting youth household was 2.5 people.

### ***Changes in Demographics of Family Sheltered Homelessness over Time***

- Between 2020 and 2021, sheltered family homelessness dropped by 15 percent (or 23,531 people). This decrease affected all age groups, but the largest drops in both absolute and percentage terms were for children under the age of 18 (14,717 fewer people or a 16% decline) and people over the age of 24 (7,528 people or 15%).
- The reductions in family homelessness did not differ by gender. The numbers of women and girls and of men and boys both declined by 15 percent.
- Family sheltered homelessness decreased by 11 percent among people who were Hispanic or Latino (5,124 fewer people), a somewhat smaller decrease than for people identifying as non-Hispanic, 17 percent (18,396 fewer people).
- Sheltered family homelessness among people who were Black or African American decreased by a larger percentage than any other race, 19 percent (16,505 fewer people).
- Pacific Islanders were the only racial group with an increase in sheltered family homelessness, 8 percent or 174 more people in 2021 than in 2020.
- The number of people in parenting youth households staying in shelter in 2021 declined by 17 percent (or 2,685 people). The number of parenting youth in shelters declined by 15 percent while the number of children in sheltered parenting youth families dropped by 19 percent between 2020 and 2021.

### 3.2 State-Level Estimates of Homeless Families with Children

Exhibit 3.6— Estimates of Sheltered Family Homelessness by State, 2021



#### *On a Single Night in 2021*

- Half of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness as part of a family with children were in three states: New York, California, and Massachusetts. The largest number by far was in shelters in New York State, 38,258 people in families with children or 29 percent of all people in sheltered families.

Exhibit 3.7 – Largest Changes in Homeless People in Families, 2020-2021

Change 2020-2021			Change 2007-2021		
State	#	%	State	#	%
<b>Largest Increases</b>					
DE	429	103.6%	NY	3,884	11.3%
CO	344	16.4%	MA	3,132	47.9%
VT	264	72.3%	DE	519	160.2%
RI	91	23.9%	CA	505	2.8%
NV	67	14.0%	VT	289	85.0%
<b>Largest Decreases<sup>a</sup></b>					
NY	-9,724	-20.3%	TX	-6,006	-61.5%
MA	-2,055	-17.5%	NJ	-5,180	-66.4%
TX	-1,851	-33.0%	WA	-4,246	-48.6%
DC	-1,196	-49.2%	PA	-3,895	-49.9%
CA	-1,123	-5.7%	IL	-3,321	-53.7%

Note: Excludes Puerto Rico and U.S. territories.

### ***Changes in Family Sheltered Homelessness over Time***

- Between 2020 and 2021, sheltered homelessness experienced by people in families with children increased in just 10 states. The largest absolute increases were in Delaware (429 more people or 104%) and Colorado (344 more people or 16%).
- The largest absolute decrease in sheltered family homelessness was in New York, with (9,724 fewer people. Massachusetts was next, with 2,055 fewer people.
- Over a longer period, 2007-2021, sheltered family homelessness increased in eight states. The largest absolute change was in New York (3,884 more people or 11%) and Massachusetts (3,132 more people).
- Between 2007 and 2021, family sheltered homelessness dropped in 42 states and the District of Columbia. The largest absolute decreases were in Texas (6,006 fewer people or 62%) and New Jersey (5,180 fewer people or 66%).

### **3.3 CoC-Level Estimates of Homeless Families with Children**

#### ***Continuums of Care (CoC) were Divided into Four Geographic Categories***

- (1) Major city CoCs (n=48) cover the CoCs that contain one of the 50 largest cities in the United States. In two cases (Phoenix and Mesa, AZ, and Arlington and Fort Worth, TX), two large cities were located in the same CoC.
- (2) Other Largely Urban CoCs (n= 59) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in an urbanized area within a principal city within the CoC (but excludes the nation's largest cities).
- (3) Largely Suburban CoCs (n= 167) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in suburban areas, defined as urbanized areas outside of a principal city or urban clusters within 10 miles of urbanized areas.
- (4) Largely Rural CoCs (n= 109) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in urban clusters that are more than 10 miles from an urbanized area or in Census-defined rural territories.

***Note: These definitions have been adapted from definitions used by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics to characterize the locations of schools.***

**Exhibit 3.8– Estimates of Sheltered Family Homelessness by Geographic Category, 2021**

Geographic Categories	N	Sheltered persons in households with at least one adult and one child, 2021	Percent share of national sheltered homeless persons in families, 2021
Total (not including territories)	383	131,118	100.0%
Major Cities	48	69,724	53.2%
Other Urban CoCs	59	6,716	5.1%
Suburban CoCs	166	33,784	25.8%
Rural CoCs	109	20,894	15.9%

**Exhibit 3.9—CoCs with the Largest Number of People Experiencing Family Sheltered Homelessness by Geographic Category, 2021**

CoC Name	Sheltered People in Families with Children	CoC Name	Sheltered People in Families with Children
<b>Major City CoCs</b>		<b>Other Largely Urban CoCs</b>	
New York City, NY	33,618	Saint Paul/Ramsey County, MN	537
Los Angeles City & County, CA	8,442	St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Largo/Pinellas County, FL	372
Boston, MA	2,889	Madison/Dane County, WI	352
Seattle/King County, WA	2,142	Oxnard, San Buenaventura/Ventura County, CA	312
Phoenix, Mesa/Maricopa County, AZ	1,596	St. Louis City, MO	265
<b>Largely Suburban CoCs</b>		<b>Largely Rural CoCs</b>	
Massachusetts Balance of State	2,067	Washington Balance of State	1,390
Nassau, Suffolk Counties, NY	1,897	Georgia Balance of State	1,252
Springfield/Hampden County, MA	1,793	Texas Balance of State	1,196
Santa Ana, Anaheim/Orange County, CA	1,043	Wisconsin Balance of State	1,131
Honolulu City and County, HI	973	Ohio Balance of State	1,098

***On a Single Night in 2021***

- More than half (53%) of all families experiencing sheltered homelessness in the United States did so in one of the nation’s 50 largest cities. Just over a quarter of people in sheltered families were in largely suburban CoCs, and 16 percent were in largely rural CoCs. The remaining five percent were in largely urban CoCs that did not have one of the nation’s largest cities.
- More than a quarter (26%) of all people in families with children experiencing sheltered homelessness in the U.S. were in New York City, 33,618 people. The CoC with the next largest number of sheltered people in families with children was Los Angeles City and County with 8,442 people (or 6%).

**Exhibit 3.10—Change in Sheltered Family Homelessness by Geographic Category, 2020-2021**

	#	%
Major Cities	-14,979	-17.7%
Other Urban CoCs	-1,155	-14.7%
Suburban CoCs	-5,134	-13.2%
Rural CoCs	-2,313	-10.0%
Total (not including territories)	-23,581	-15.2%

***Change over time by CoC Category***

- Family sheltered homelessness declined in all four CoC categories between 2020 and 2021 by ten percent or more. The largest drop was in major cities (18%), which had 14,979 fewer people in families staying in shelters in 2021 than in 2020. New York City accounted for a considerable portion of that decline, as there were nearly 8,000 fewer people in families with children in shelter in 2021 than there were in 2020. By comparison, the number of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness in New York City remained relatively flat during the same time period.
- Rural CoCs experienced the smallest change but still experienced a 10 percent decline in sheltered homelessness among families with children.

## 4. Estimates of Unaccompanied Sheltered Homeless Youth in the United States

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD encouraged communities to determine whether conducting an unsheltered PIT count posed a high risk of exacerbating COVID-19 transmissions, given the lack of widespread access to COVID-19 vaccines at the time. If communities determined COVID-19 risks were too high *and* notified HUD that they would use the available waiver flexibility, HUD waived the requirement to conduct the unsheltered count in 2021. Communities that determined that unsheltered PIT counts could be conducted without increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, could notify HUD that they would use available waiver flexibility that waived some of the unsheltered homeless data collection requirements. As a result, in January of 2021, 150 communities, 39 percent of all communities, conducted full unsheltered counts (i.e., counts that included all data elements for both sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts). An additional 76 communities conducted a partial count in which total unsheltered counts were reported but not household or demographic characteristics.

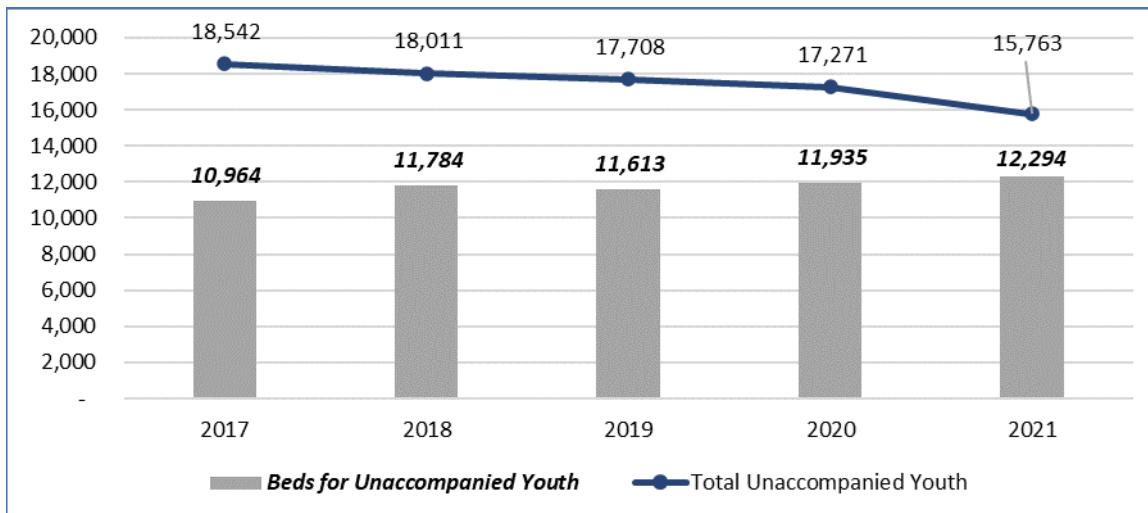
All chapters in this report that provide statistically valid estimates of homelessness at a point in time in January will focus on the sheltered population. A separate chapter will explore the non-representative sample of communities that did conduct unsheltered counts.

The pandemic also resulted in considerable changes to the capacity of homeless service providers. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, facility-based emergency shelters with congregate settings took measures to increase physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some cases, this reduced capacity was reported through the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), but in other communities it was not. Estimates of the number of unaccompanied youth experiencing sheltered homelessness at a point in time in 2021 should be viewed with caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities or safety concerns regarding staying in shelters.

HUD's Point-in-Time (PIT) count data collection includes information on the number of young adults and children, people under the age of 25, who are experiencing homelessness "unaccompanied"—that is, without a parent or guardian present. Children and youth who experience sheltered homelessness on their own are just 15 percent of all people under the age of 25 experiencing sheltered homelessness. In addition to not experiencing homelessness with a parent, unaccompanied youth are not themselves experiencing homelessness as parents with one or more children. Thus, unaccompanied youth are a subset of the population that experiences homelessness as individuals.

## 4.1 National Estimates of Unaccompanied Youth

**Exhibit 4-1: Estimates of Sheltered Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and Beds Dedicated to Unaccompanied Youth, 2017-2021**



**Exhibit 4-2: Beds Dedicated to Unaccompanied Youth by Project Type, 2021**

	Number of Beds Dedicated to Unaccompanied Youth		Number of Beds Dedicated to Individuals	
	#	%	#	%
Total Shelter Beds	12,294	100.0%	217,684	100.0%
ES	5,821	47.4%	168,521	77.4%
SH	10	0.1%	2,476	1.1%
TH	6,463	52.6%	46,687	21.4%

### *On a Single Night in January 2021*

- 15,763 unaccompanied youth were reported to be experiencing homelessness in emergency shelter or transitional housing programs across the United States. These unaccompanied youth were just under five percent of the total population of people experiencing sheltered homelessness and just over eight percent of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness as individuals.
- Another 5,775 youth were experiencing sheltered homelessness as parents, with at least one child under the age of 18. (More detail on parenting youth is in Section 3 of this report, Homeless Families with Children.)
- Most sheltered unaccompanied homeless youth identified in January 2021 were between the ages of 18 and 24 (92% or 14,418 people). The remaining nine percent (1,345 people) were children (under the age of 18) experiencing sheltered homelessness on their own.
- As a part of their housing inventory, communities report on the number of “dedicated beds,” which are those set aside for specific populations, such as youth. They do not represent all beds *occupied* by youth, just those specifically set aside for people under the age of 25. In January 2021, communities reported a total of 16,156 beds dedicated to all youth experiencing homelessness. Of those, more than three-quarters (76% or 12,294 beds) were specifically dedicated to unaccompanied youth, with the rest dedicated to parenting youth.

- More than half of dedicated youth beds were in transitional housing programs, a considerably larger share than the share of beds for all individuals that are in transitional housing programs, 21 percent.
- Nearly all of the 5,821 emergency shelter beds dedicated to unaccompanied youth were facility-based, located in facility-based settings (93% or 5,401 beds). Three percent of beds were in hotels, motels, or other scattered-site locations. On the HIC, these are reported as “voucher-based beds.” The remaining four percent of beds were in other locations, such as churches, faith-based organizations, or private organizations that are not part of the homeless services system. Compared to beds for all individuals, youth beds were slightly more likely to be in these other locations and slightly less likely to be voucher beds.

**Exhibit 4-3: Change in Numbers of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth, 2017-2021**

	Change 2020-2021		Change 2017-2021	
	#	%	#	%
Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth	-1,508	-8.7%	-2,779	-15.0%
Unaccompanied Youth (under 18)	-337	-20.0%	-777	-36.6%
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (18-24)	-1,171	-7.5%	-2,002	-12.2%

**Exhibit 4-4. ES Beds Dedicated to Unaccompanied Youth by Bed Type, 2020-2021**

	Number of Beds Dedicated to Unaccompanied Youth				Change 2020-2021	
	2020		2021		#	%
Total Unaccompanied Youth Beds in Emergency Shelter	5,490	100%	5,821	100%	331	6.0%
Facility-based Beds	5,190	94.5%	5,401	92.8%	211	4.1%
Other Beds	214	3.9%	234	4.0%	20	9.3%
Voucher-based Beds	86	1.6%	186	3.2%	100	116.3%

***Changes over Time***

- The number of sheltered unaccompanied youth reported by communities has declined over each of the past four years. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of sheltered unaccompanied youth declined by nearly nine percent (or 1,508 fewer youth). This is considerably steeper than the decline of all individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness (2% fewer individuals).
- Between 2017 (the baseline year for youth experiencing homelessness in the PIT count) and 2021, there was a 15 percent decline in the overall number of sheltered unaccompanied youth reported nationally (or 2,779 fewer youth).
- The dedicated capacity to serve unaccompanied youth has remained relatively steady since 2017. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of youth beds increased by two percent (or 331 beds) a more modest rise than the increase in beds for all individuals (5%).

## Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth Population

**Exhibit 4-5: Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness, 2021**

	Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth, 2021		Change in Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth, 2020-2021	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Total</b>	15,763	100%	-1508	-8.7%
<b>Age</b>				
<b>Under 18</b>	1,345	8.5%	-337	-20.0%
<b>18 to 24</b>	14,418	91.5%	-1,171	-7.5%
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Female</b>	6,848	43.4%	-608	-8.2%
<b>Male</b>	8,321	52.8%	-1,029	-11.0%
<b>Transgender</b>	405	2.6%	90	28.6%
<b>Gender Non-conforming</b>	189	1.2%	39	26.0%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	3,493	22.2%	-21	-0.6%
<b>Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino</b>	12,269	77.8%	-1,488	-10.8%
<b>Race</b>				
<b>Asian</b>	182	1.2%	3	1.7%
<b>Black or African American</b>	6,823	43.3%	-673	-9.0%
<b>Native American</b>	524	3.3%	91	21.0%
<b>Pacific Islander</b>	154	1.0%	9	6.2%
<b>White</b>	6,984	44.3%	-481	-6.4%
<b>Multiple Races</b>	1,096	7.0%	-457	-29.4%

### *Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth*

- The characteristics of unaccompanied youth experiencing sheltered homelessness differ from those of the overall population experiencing sheltered homelessness as individuals. Sheltered unaccompanied youth were more likely to be people of color and female than all sheltered homeless individuals.
- Over 43 percent of sheltered unaccompanied youth were women or girls (43%). By contrast, only 31 percent of all individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness were women or girls.
- Youth identifying as transgender or as someone who does not identify as male, female, or transgender accounted for four percent of the sheltered unaccompanied youth population, compared with less than one percent of the sheltered individual homeless population.
- Compared with all individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness, sheltered unaccompanied youth were more likely to be African American (43% versus 40%) or multiracial (7% versus 4%).
- Just over one-fifth of sheltered unaccompanied homeless youth were Hispanic or Latino (22%), compared with 17 percent of all sheltered homeless individuals.
- Compared with all sheltered individuals, sheltered unaccompanied youth were more likely to identify as a race other than white or African American, including those with multiple racial identities (13% versus 9%).

### *Changes in Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth*

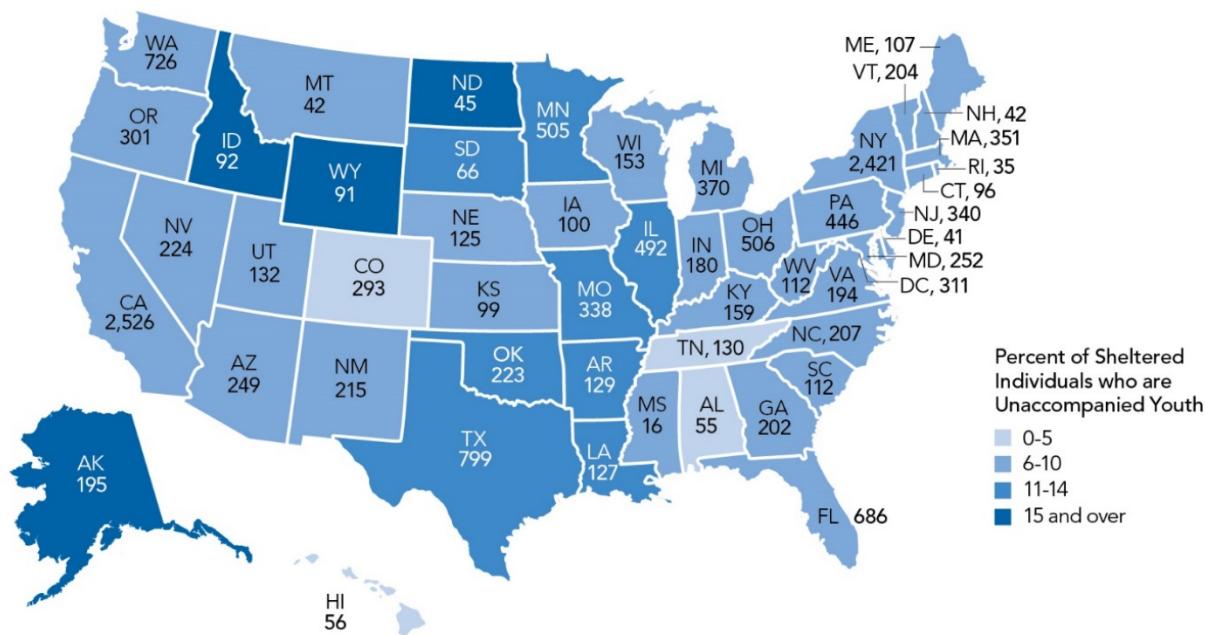
- Decreases in sheltered homelessness among unaccompanied youth were experienced across nearly all demographic characteristics. Children experiencing homelessness on their own represented the largest

percentage decline, with 20 percent fewer unaccompanied youth under 18 years old in the sheltered population in 2021 than in 2020.

- The number of sheltered unaccompanied youth who identified as male decreased by 11 percent; the number of sheltered unaccompanied youth who identified as female decreased by eight percent. However, the number of people who were transgender increased by 29 percent (90 more youth) and the number of unaccompanied youth staying in sheltered locations who were gender non-conforming increased by 26 percent (or 39 people).
- Between 2020 and 2021, the number of unaccompanied youth experiencing sheltered homelessness who were white decreased by six percent. The number of sheltered African American unaccompanied youth decreased by nine percent, while the number of sheltered unaccompanied youth who were multiracial declined by 29 percent. Though the number was relatively small, sheltered unaccompanied youth who were Native American experienced the largest percentage increase, at 21 percent (or 91 people).
- The number of non-Hispanic/non-Latino unaccompanied youth experiencing sheltered homelessness decreased by 11 percent, while the number of Hispanic or Latino sheltered unaccompanied youth remained fairly stable, with a less than one percent decline.

## 4.2 State-Level Estimates of Sheltered Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

**Exhibit 4-6 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth by State, 2021**



### *On a Single Night in January 2021*

- California (2,526 youth) and New York (2,421 youth) reported the largest numbers of sheltered unaccompanied homeless youth, accounting for nearly one third of all sheltered unaccompanied homeless youth nationally (31%).

- Other states with large numbers of sheltered unaccompanied homeless youth were Texas (799 or 5%), Washington (726 or 5%), Florida (686 or 4%), Ohio (506 or 3%), and Minnesota (505 or 3%).

**Exhibit 4-7: Largest Changes in Sheltered Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, 2020-2021**

State	Change in Unaccompanied Youth, 2020-2021	
	#	%
<b>Largest Increases</b>		
VT	119	140.0%
DC	77	32.9%
MD	66	35.5%
AR	41	46.6%
ID	41	80.4%
<b>Largest Decreases</b>		
NY	-348	-12.6%
OR	-149	-33.1%
CA	-136	-5.1%
NC	-118	-36.3%
FL	-117	-14.6%

#### ***Changes Over Time***

- Sixteen states and the District of Columbia reported increases in the number of unaccompanied youth staying in shelter between 2020 and 2021. The largest absolute increase in sheltered unaccompanied youth homelessness were in Vermont (119), the District of Columbia (77), and Maryland (66). States with the largest percentage increases were Vermont (140%), Idaho (80%), and Rhode Island (75%).
- Thirty-three states reported decreases in the number of unaccompanied youth staying in sheltered locations. The largest absolute declines were reported by New York (348), Oregon (149), and California (136). The largest percentage decreases were in Mississippi (48%), Wyoming (47%), Alabama (47%), and Tennessee (46%).
- One state, Nevada, reported no change in the number of unaccompanied youth experiencing sheltered homelessness.

### **4.3 CoC-Level Estimates of Sheltered Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

#### ***Continuums of Care (CoC) were divided into four geographic categories***

- (1) Major city CoCs (n=48) are CoCs that contain one of the 50 largest cities in the United States. In two cases, Phoenix and Mesa, AZ, and Arlington and Fort Worth, TX, two of the largest US cities are located in the same CoC.
- (2) Other largely urban CoCs (n=59) are CoCs in which the population lives predominately in an urbanized area within the CoC's principal city or cities, but the CoCs does not include one of the nation's 50 largest cities.
- (3) Largely suburban CoCs (n=167) are CoCs in which the population lives predominantly in suburban areas, defined as urbanized areas outside of a principal city or urban clusters within 10 miles of urbanized areas.

- (4)** Largely rural CoCs (n=109) are CoCs in which the population lives predominantly in urban clusters that are more than 10 miles from an urbanized area or in Census-defined rural areas.

**Note:** These definitions have been adapted from definitions used by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics to characterize the locations of schools.

**Exhibit 4-8: Share of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth in each CoC Category by Sheltered Status, 2021**

	Number of CoCs	Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth	Distribution Across CoC Type
<b>Total</b>	383	15,750	100%
<b>Major City CoCs</b>	48	7,500	47.6%
<b>Other Largely Urban CoCs</b>	59	1,172	7.4%
<b>Largely Suburban CoCs</b>	166	3,811	24.2%
<b>Largely Rural CoCs</b>	109	3,267	20.7%

**Exhibit 4-9: CoCs with the Largest Numbers of Sheltered Unaccompanied Homeless Youth by Geographic Category, 2021**

CoC Name	Sheltered Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, 2021	CoC Name	Sheltered Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, 2021
<b>Major City CoCs</b>		<b>Other Largely Urban CoCs</b>	
New York City	1,881	Anchorage, AK	115
Los Angeles City & County, CA	874	Saint Paul/Ramsey County, MN	108
San Diego City and County, CA	334	Boise/Ada County, ID	76
Seattle/King County, WA	316	Spokane City & County, WA	73
District of Columbia	311	Burlington/Chittenden County, VT	62
<b>Largely Suburban CoCs</b>		<b>Largely Rural CoCs</b>	
St. Louis County, MO	119	Washington Balance of State	217
Cleveland/Cuyahoga County, OH	106	Texas Balance of State	166
Frederick City & County, MD	98	Ohio Balance of State	150
Connecticut Balance of State	88	Vermont Balance of State	142
Salt Lake City & County, UT	86	Indiana Balance of State	118

**On a Single Night in January 2021**

- About half (48%) of all unaccompanied youth in sheltered locations were counted in the nation's major cities. Nearly one quarter of all unaccompanied youth experiencing sheltered homelessness were in largely suburban CoCs (24%), nearly one in five (21%) were in largely rural CoCs, and less than one in ten were in other largely urban CoCs (7%).
- New York City and Los Angeles (major city CoCs) had the largest numbers of sheltered unaccompanied youth in the country, reporting 1,881 people and 874 people under the age of 25 and

homeless on their own. The major cities with the next highest numbers are San Diego (334 people), Seattle (316 people) and the District of Columbia (311 people).

- Sheltered unaccompanied youth were slightly less likely to be found in one of the nation's largest cities than all sheltered individuals (48% versus 51%) and more likely to be found in largely rural areas (21% versus 17%).

**Exhibit 4-10: Change in Sheltered Unaccompanied Homeless Youth by CoC Category, 2020-2021**

	Change in Sheltered Homeless Unaccompanied Youth, from 2020 to 2021	
	#	%
Total	-1,505	-8.7%
Major Cities	-597	-7.4%
Other Largely Urban CoCs	-213	-15.4%
Largely Suburban CoCs	-532	-12.2%
Largely Rural CoCs	-163	-4.8%

***Changes over Time by CoC Category***

- Between 2020 and 2021, the number of unaccompanied youth staying in sheltered locations declined in all geographic categories. While this mirrors what occurred across all populations during this time period, the decline for youth was steeper in all geographic categories than it was for sheltered individuals, indicating individuals under the age of 25 were less likely to stay in shelters than those over the age of 25.
- Major cities experienced the largest absolute decline in unaccompanied sheltered youth (597 fewer youth or 7%). Other largely urban areas without a major city saw the largest percentage decline (15% or 213 fewer people). Largely suburban areas experienced a 12 percent decline in unaccompanied sheltered youth, and largely rural areas had a five percent decline.

## 5. Estimates of Sheltered Homeless Veterans in the United States

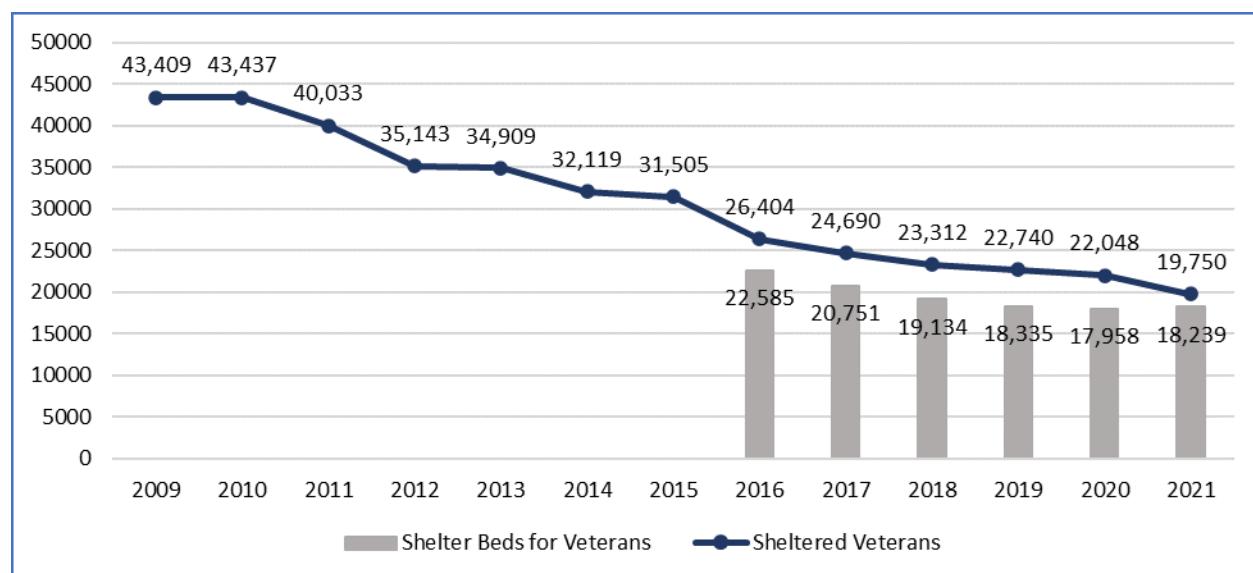
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD encouraged communities to determine whether conducting an unsheltered PIT count posed a high risk of exacerbating COVID-19 transmissions, given the lack of widespread access to COVID-19 vaccines at the time. If communities determined COVID-19 risks were too high *and* notified HUD that they would use the available waiver flexibility, HUD waived the requirement to conduct the unsheltered count in 2021. Communities that determined that unsheltered PIT counts could be conducted without increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, could notify HUD that they would use available waiver flexibility that waived some of the unsheltered homeless data collection requirements. As a result, in January of 2021, 150 communities, 39 percent of all communities, conducted full unsheltered counts (i.e., counts that included all data elements for both sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts). An additional 76 communities conducted a partial count in which total unsheltered counts were reported but not household or demographic characteristics.

All chapters in this report that provide statistically valid estimates of homelessness at a point in time in January will focus on the sheltered population. A separate chapter will explore the non-representative sample of communities that did conduct unsheltered counts.

The pandemic also resulted in considerable changes to the capacity of homeless service providers. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, facility-based emergency shelters with congregate settings took measures to increase physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some cases, this reduced capacity was reported through the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), but in other communities it was not. Estimates of the number of veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness at a point in time in 2021 should be viewed with caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities or safety concerns regarding staying in shelters.

### 5.1 National Estimates of Sheltered Homeless Veterans

Exhibit 5-1 Veteran Sheltered Homelessness, 2007-2021



### ***On a Single Night in January 2021***

- 19,750 veterans were experiencing sheltered homelessness, staying in emergency shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing programs.
- Eight percent of all sheltered adults experiencing homelessness were veterans. And sheltered veterans accounted for 11 out of every 10,000 veterans in the country.
- Nearly all (97%) of veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness were doing so individuals. Of those individuals, 15 percent (3,005 veterans) had chronic patterns of homelessness.
- Only 603 veterans were experiencing sheltered homelessness as part of a family with children. Veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness in families accounted for three percent of all veterans.
- Beginning in 2016, communities reported the number of beds in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and safe havens that were dedicated specifically to veterans experiencing homelessness. In 2021, 18,243 beds were dedicated to veterans. However, veterans also stayed in beds not specifically dedicated to that population, explaining why there are more sheltered veterans counted than shelter beds for them.

**Exhibit 5-2. Changes in Sheltered Veterans and Beds Dedicated to Veterans, 2009-2021**

	Change in Sheltered Veterans #	Change in Sheltered Veterans %	Changes in Beds Dedicated to Veterans, 2009-2021	
2020 to 2021	-2,298	-10.4%	285	1.6%
2010 to 2021	-23,687	-54.5%		
2009 to 2021	-23,659	-54.5%		

### ***Changes over Time***

- Veteran sheltered homelessness had been decreasing in recent years, and between January of 2020 and January of 2021, this trend continued. The number of veterans staying in sheltered locations declined by 10 percent (or 2,298 people). This represents the largest one-year decline since 2015-2016, when the number of sheltered veterans dropped by 16 percent.
- Between 2009 (when the data were first reported) and 2021, 23,659 fewer veterans experienced sheltered homelessness, a 55 percent drop.
- Between 2020 and 2021, communities reported an additional 285 beds in shelter programs dedicated to veterans (a 2% rise). This is the first increase in shelter capacity dedicated specifically to veterans since data collection on veteran beds began in 2016.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Veteran Population**

**Exhibit 5-3. Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Veteran Population, 2021**

	Sheltered 2021 #	Sheltered 2021 %	Change 2020-2021	Percentage Change
Total Veterans	19,750	100%	-2,298	-10.4%
Gender				
Female	1,562	7.9%	-100	-6.0%
Male	18,138	91.8%	-2,186	-10.8%
Transgender	35	0.2%	-14	-28.6%
Gender non-conforming	15	0.1%	2	15.4%

	<b>Sheltered 2021 #</b>	<b>Sheltered 2021 %</b>	<b>Change 2020-2021</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Non-Hispanic	18,049	91.4%	-2,185	-10.8%
Hispanic	1,701	8.6%	-113	-6.2%
<b>Race</b>				
Asian	132	0.7%	-57	-30.2%
Black	7,219	36.6%	-1,161	-13.9%
Multiple Races	643	3.3%	-72	-10.1%
Native American	388	2.0%	-30	-7.2%
Pacific Islander	159	0.8%	0	0.0%
White	11,209	56.8%	-978	-8.0%

#### ***Demographic Characteristics of Veterans Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness***

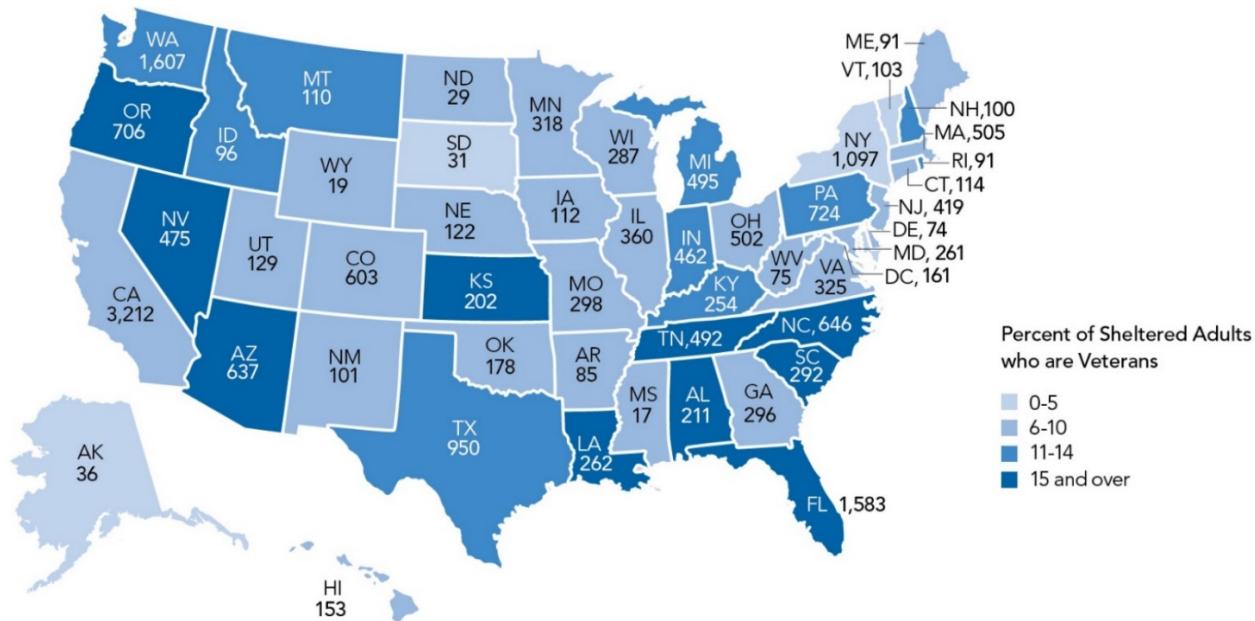
- Men accounted for more than nine of every ten veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness in 2021 (92% or 18,138), very similar to the share of all veterans in the U.S., which is 91 percent.
- Woman veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness were more likely (17%) than their male counterparts (2%) to be in a household with a child under 18 years of age.
- African Americans were overrepresented among the sheltered homeless veteran population. While 12 percent of U.S. veterans are Black or African American, Black veterans comprised over one third of the sheltered homeless veteran population in 2021. Conversely, 81 percent of U.S. veterans are White, but White veterans make up only 57 percent of the sheltered homeless veteran population.
- Fewer than one in ten sheltered veterans were Hispanic or Latino (9%), less than half the rate of sheltered individuals who were Hispanic or Latino (22%). However, Hispanic or Latino veterans were slightly overrepresented among the sheltered homeless population compared to the share of all U.S. veterans who are Hispanic, which is seven percent.

#### ***Changes in Demographic Characteristics of Veterans Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness***

- The decrease in the number of veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness from 2020 to 2021 occurred across most demographic groups. The largest numerical decreases were for veterans identifying as Black and veterans identifying as not Hispanic or Latino.

## 5.2 State-Level Estimates of Sheltered Veterans

**Exhibit 5-4. Sheltered Veteran Estimates by State, 2021**



### *On a Single Night in January 2021*

- Over a third of all veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness were in one of four states: California (16% or 3,212), Florida (8% or 1,583), New York (6% or 1,097), and Texas (5% or 950).
- The states with the highest rates of all veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness were Vermont, where 29 veterans out of 10,000 experienced sheltered homelessness in 2021, Oregon (27 out of 10,000 veterans), Nevada (22 out of 10,000), and California (22 out of 10,000).
- States with the lowest rates of veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness in 2021 were Mississippi, where only one out of every 10,000 veterans experienced sheltered homelessness in 2021, followed by Wyoming, Arkansas, Georgia, Virginia, and South Dakota where sheltered veterans accounted for 5 out of every 10,000 veterans statewide.

### Exhibit 5-5. Largest Changes in Sheltered Veteran Population by State, 2009-2021

State	Change in sheltered veterans, from 2020 to 2021	Percent change in veterans, from 2020 to 2021	State	Change in sheltered veterans, from 2009 to 2021	Percent change in veterans, from 2009 to 2021
<b>Increases</b>					
Florida	113	7.7%	Oregon	135	23.6%
Tennessee	68	16.0%	Vermont	65	171.1%
Arizona	58	10.0%	Idaho	62	182.4%
Oregon	52	8.0%	New Hampshire	40	66.7%
Minnesota	50	18.7%	Rhode Island	32	54.2%
<b>Decreases</b>					
Massachusetts	-302	-37.4%	New York	-3,635	-76.8%
Pennsylvania	-196	-21.3%	California	-2,615	-44.9%
Ohio	-196	-28.1%	Texas	-2,084	-68.7%
California	-193	-5.7%	Georgia	-1,633	-84.7%
Texas	-167	-15.0%	Florida	-1,075	-40.4%

#### Changes over Time

- The sheltered homelessness veteran population increased from 2020 to 2021 in 13 states. The largest absolute increases were in Florida (113 more veterans), Tennessee (68 more veterans), Arizona (58), Oregon (52), and Minnesota (50). The largest percentage increases occurred in Vermont, with 54 percent more sheltered veterans in 2021 than in 2020 (or 36 more veterans) and Utah (32% or 31 more veterans).
- All other states saw decreases in sheltered veteran homelessness population. The five states with largest decreases were Massachusetts (-302), Pennsylvania (-196), Ohio (-196), California (-193), and Texas (-167). The largest percentage declines in sheltered veterans occurred in Wyoming (58% or 26 fewer veterans), Alaska (56% or 46 fewer veterans), and Mississippi (54% or 20 fewer veterans).
- Between 2009 and 2021, the sheltered veteran homelessness population increased in only 6 states: Oregon (135 more sheltered veterans), Vermont (65), Idaho (62), New Hampshire (40), Rhode Island (32), and Montana (27). All other states saw decreases in their sheltered veteran homelessness population in that time. New York experienced the largest decrease, with 3,635 fewer sheltered homeless veterans in 2021, a decrease of 77 percent from 2007. California saw a decrease of 2,615 sheltered veterans, and Texas a decrease of 2,084.

### 5.3 CoC-Level Estimates of Sheltered Veterans

#### *Continuums of Care (CoC) were Divided into Four Geographic Categories*

- (1) Major city CoCs (n=48) cover the CoCs that contain one of the 50 largest cities in the United States. In two cases (Phoenix and Mesa, AZ, and Arlington and Fort Worth, TX), two large cities were located in the same CoC.
- (2) Other Largely Urban CoCs (n= 59) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in an urbanized area within a principal city within the CoC (but excludes the nation's largest cities).

(3) Largely Suburban CoCs (n= 166) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in suburban areas, defined as urbanized areas outside of a principal city or urban clusters within 10 miles of urbanized areas.

(4) Largely Rural CoCs (n= 109) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in urban clusters that are more than 10 miles from an urbanized area or in Census-defined rural territories.

**Note:** These definitions have been adapted from definitions used by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics to characterize the locations of schools.

#### Exhibit 5-6. Sheltered Homelessness by Geographic Category

	Number of CoCs	Veterans in Sheltered Locations	Distribution of Veterans across CoC Type
Total	383	19,733	100%
Major Cities	48	8,799	44.3%
Other Urban CoCs	59	1,946	10.2%
Suburban CoCs	166	5,499	27.9%
Rural CoCs	109	3,489	17.6%

#### Exhibit 5-7. CoCs with the Largest Number of People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness by Geographic Category, 2021

CoC Name	Veterans Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness, 2021	CoC Name	Veterans Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness, 2021
Major Cities		Other Largely Urban CoCs	
Los Angeles City & County, CA	665	St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Largo/Pinellas County, FL	285
New York City	620	St. Louis City, MO	125
Metropolitan Denver, CO	418	Reno, Sparks/Washoe County, NV	100
Seattle/King County, WA	405	Oxnard, San Buenaventura/Ventura County, CA	90
San Diego City and County, CA	393	Spokane City & County, WA	89
Largely Suburban CoCs		Largely Rural CoCs	
Asheville/Buncombe County, NC	182	Oregon Balance of State	228
Orlando/Orange, Osceola, Seminole Counties, FL	177	Indiana Balance of State	218
Santa Ana, Anaheim/Orange County, CA	162	Washington Balance of State	216
Cincinnati/Hamilton County, OH	160	Texas Balance of State	162
Honolulu City and County, HI	132	Arizona Balance of State	148

#### On a Single Night in January 2021

- Veterans were less likely than all people experiencing sheltered homelessness to be in major cities and more likely to be in rural and suburban areas.
- Major city CoCs accounted for less than half of the sheltered veterans nationwide (44%), compared to 52 percent of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness. Conversely, CoCs that

were largely suburban accounted for over one-quarter (28%) of sheltered homeless veterans, slightly higher than the 25 percent share for people experiencing sheltered homelessness.

- About 18 percent of sheltered homeless veterans were counted in largely rural CoCs, and ten percent were counted in other largely urban CoCs, similar to the percentage of all individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Los Angeles, New York City, and Denver had the largest number of veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness, with 665, 620, and 418 sheltered homeless veterans.

**Exhibit 5-8 Change in Sheltered Veteran Homelessness and Bed Inventory by Geographic Category, 2020-2021**

	Change in veteran sheltered homelessness, from 2020 to 2021	Percent change in veteran sheltered homelessness, from 2020 to 2021	Percent change in individual sheltered homelessness, from 2020 to 2021
Total	-2,293	-10.4%	-2.3%
Major Cities	-1,126	-11.3%	0.9%
Other Urban CoCs	-231	-10.6%	-7.4%
Suburban CoCs	-751	-12.0%	-5.7%
Rural CoCs	-185	-5.0%	-4.1%

**Changes over Time**

- The number of veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness decreased in all geographic categories between 2020 and 2021. The largest decreases occurred in largely suburban CoCs, with 12 percent fewer sheltered veterans in 2021 than in 2020. Largely rural CoCs had the smallest change in the sheltered veteran population, with a decrease of 5 percent between 2020 and 2021.
- Between 2020 and 2021, the number of sheltered veterans declined at slightly greater rates than all people experiencing sheltered homelessness in all geographic categories except rural areas, where the decline in all people in sheltered locations outpaced that of sheltered veterans. Compared to individuals, however, the differences are greater. In major cities, the number of sheltered veterans declined by 11 percent compared with a one percent increase among sheltered individuals. In largely suburban areas the declines in sheltered veterans more than doubled that of sheltered individuals (12% versus 6%). This may reflect increased utilization of rapid rehousing and other permanent housing options targeted to veterans in response to the pandemic.

## 6. Estimates of Sheltered Chronically Homeless Individuals in the United States

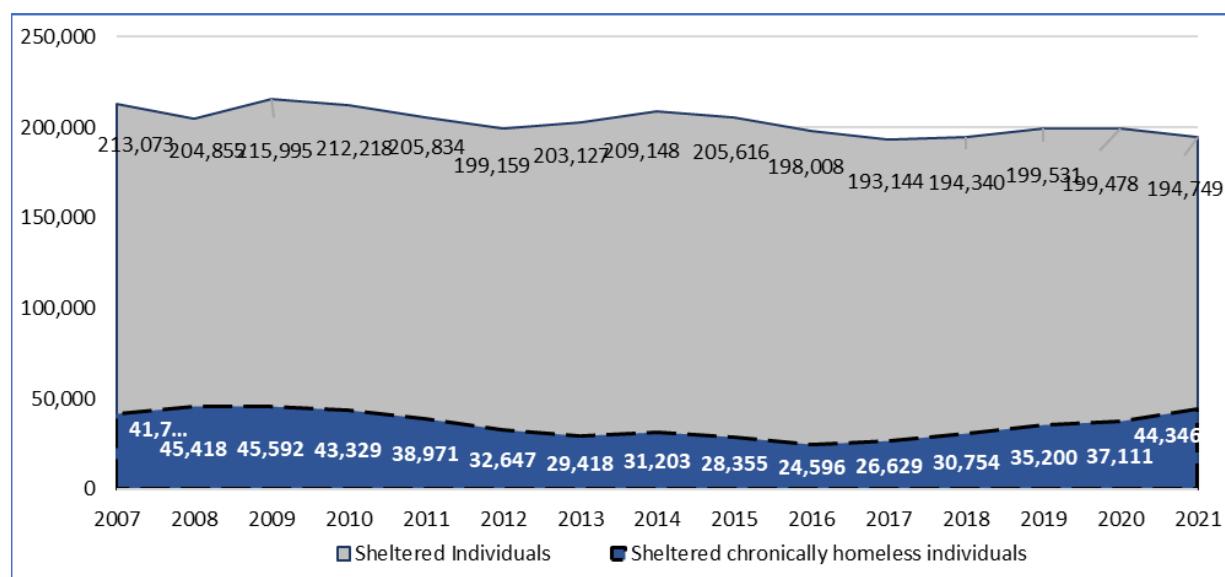
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD encouraged communities to determine whether conducting an unsheltered PIT count posed a high risk of exacerbating COVID-19 transmissions, given the lack of widespread access to COVID-19 vaccines at the time. If communities determined COVID-19 risks were too high *and* notified HUD that they would use the available waiver flexibility, HUD waived the requirement to conduct the unsheltered count in 2021. Communities that determined that unsheltered PIT counts could be conducted without increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, could notify HUD that they would use available waiver flexibility that waived some of the unsheltered homeless data collection requirements. As a result, in January of 2021, 150 communities, 39 percent of all communities, conducted full unsheltered counts (i.e., counts that included all data elements for both sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts). An additional 76 communities conducted a partial count in which total unsheltered counts were reported but not household or demographic characteristics.

All chapters in this report that provide statistically valid estimates of homelessness at a point in time in January will focus on the sheltered population. A separate chapter will explore the non-representative sample of communities that did conduct unsheltered counts.

The pandemic also resulted in considerable changes to the capacity of homeless service providers. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, facility-based emergency shelters with congregate settings took measures to increase physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some cases, this reduced capacity was reported through the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), but in other communities it was not. Estimates of the number of chronically homeless individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness at a point in time in 2021 should be viewed with caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities or safety concerns regarding staying in shelters.

### 6.1 National Estimates of Sheltered Chronically Homeless Individuals

**Exhibit 6-1 Sheltered Individuals and Chronically Homeless Individuals, 2007-2021**



***On a single night in January 2021***

- In January of 2021, 44,346 individuals with chronic patterns of homelessness were staying in emergency shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing programs. Individuals are considered to have chronic patterns of homelessness if they have a disability and have been homeless for a total of at least a year over the past three years.
- Chronically homeless individuals accounted for 23 percent of all individuals staying in sheltered locations.

**Exhibit 6-2 Changes in Sheltered Chronically Homeless Individuals, 2007-2021**

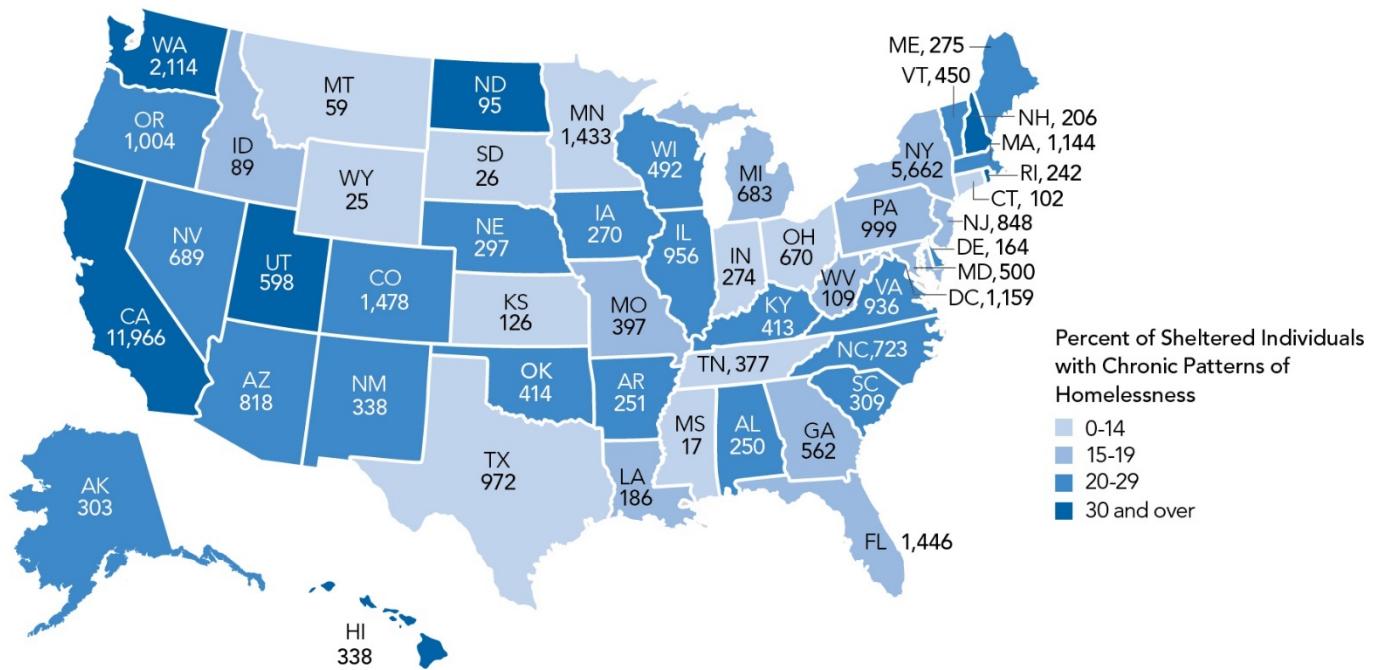
	#	%
2020 to 2021	7,235	19.5%
2016 to 2021	19,750	80.3%
2007 to 2021	2,578	6.2%

**Changes over Time**

- The number of sheltered chronically homeless individuals has been rising steadily since 2016. The largest one-year jump occurring between January 2020 and January 2021, when the number of chronically homeless individuals staying in sheltered locations increased by 20 percent (or 7,235 people).
- Since 2007, when these data were first collected, the net increase in the number of sheltered individuals with chronic patterns of homelessness is six percent (or 2,578). Since 2016, when the number of chronically homeless individuals staying in shelter was the lowest since data collection began, the number of chronically homeless individuals has increased by 80 percent.
- The trends in the sheltered chronically homeless individual population run counter to those of all sheltered individuals. While the overall sheltered individual population has declined, the number of chronically homeless individuals staying in shelter programs has increased in recent years and especially between 2020 and 2021.

## 6.2 State-Level Estimates of Chronically Homeless Individuals Staying in Shelters

**Exhibit 6-3. Sheltered Estimates by State, 2021**



**Exhibit 6-4 Percent of Sheltered Individuals with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness by State, 2021**

<b>Highest Rates</b>	
Rhode Island	39.4%
Minnesota	38.6%
California	36.4%
District of Columbia	36.3%
Utah	35.9%
<b>Lowest Rates</b>	
South Dakota	5.0%
Mississippi	6.3%
Connecticut	6.8%
Montana	7.9%
Indiana	9.9%

- More than half of all sheltered chronically homeless individuals in the country were in five states: California (11,966 people or 27%), New York (5,662 or 13%), Washington (2,114 or 5%), Florida (1,446 or 3%), and Colorado (1,478 or 3%).
- Several states had high percentages of chronic homelessness within the sheltered individual population. Rhode Island and Minnesota had the highest proportions as almost four out of every 10 sheltered individuals in those states had chronic patterns of homelessness (39%). California had the largest number of chronically homeless individuals and one of the largest rates of chronic patterns of homelessness among sheltered individuals (36%). In New York City, the CoC with the

second largest number of chronically homeless individuals, only 15 percent of sheltered individuals had chronic patterns of homelessness.

- Five states had rates of chronic homelessness among sheltered individuals under 10 percent. At 5 percent, South Dakota had the smallest percentage of sheltered individuals with chronic patterns.

#### **Exhibit 6-5 Change in Percentage of Sheltered Individuals with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness, 2020-2021**

<b>Largest Increases</b>		<b>Percentage Point Change</b>
Minnesota		13.9
Rhode Island		11.6
North Dakota		11.4
Utah		9.6
Virginia		9.5
<b>Largest Decreases</b>		<b>Percentage Point Change</b>
New Mexico		-19.4
South Dakota		-10.4
Delaware		-5.5
Mississippi		-4.3
Maryland		-3.3

#### **Exhibit 6-6. Largest Changes in Sheltered Chronically Homeless Individuals by State, 2007-2021**

<b>Change 2020-2021</b>			<b>Change 2007-2021</b>		
<b>State</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Largest Increases</b>					
California	3,930	48.9%	California	6,016	101.1%
New York	830	17.2%	New York	3,249	134.6%
Minnesota	687	92.1%	Colorado	1,074	265.8%
Virginia	399	74.3%	Washington	781	58.6%
Vermont	318	240.9%	Nevada	498	260.7%
<b>Largest Decreases<sup>a</sup></b>					
New Mexico	-306	-47.5%	Texas	-2,318	-70.5%
Pennsylvania	-226	-18.4%	West Virginia	-949	-89.7%
Maryland	-217	-30.3%	Ohio	-931	-58.2%
Texas	-185	-16.0%	Massachusetts	-912	-44.4%
Missouri	-96	-19.5%	New Jersey	-734	-46.4%
<b>Excludes Puerto Rico and U.S. Territories</b>					

#### **Changes over Time**

- Between 2020 and 2021, the number of sheltered chronically homeless individuals increased in 29 states and the District of Columbia. The largest absolute increases were reported by CoCs in California (3,930) and New York (830). During the same time period, most states (40 states and the District of Columbia) also experienced increases in the share of the sheltered individual population that had chronic patterns of homelessness. New York and California, the two states

with the largest numbers, had increases of eight and three percentage points between 2020 and 2021 in the share of sheltered individuals who were chronically homeless.

- Twenty-one states reported decreases in the number of chronically homeless individuals staying in sheltered locations between 2020 and 2021. The largest absolute decreases were in New Mexico (306 fewer chronically homeless individuals), Pennsylvania (226 fewer), and Maryland (217). Ten states experienced decreases in the share of sheltered individuals that had chronic patterns of homelessness during that same time period, with the largest decrease reported by CoCs in New Mexico, from 42 percent in 2020 to 29 percent in 2021 (a 19 percentage point decline).
- Between 2007 and 2020, the number of sheltered chronically homeless individuals increased in 26 states. The largest absolute increases were in California (6,016) and New York (3,249).
- Over the longer period, the number of sheltered chronically homeless individuals decreased in 24 states and the District of Columbia. The largest absolute decrease occurred across CoCs in Texas (2,318 fewer sheltered chronically homeless individuals) and the largest percentage decreases occurred in Mississippi and West Virginia (90%).

### 6.3 CoC-Level Estimates of Sheltered Individuals with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness

#### *Continuums of Care (CoC) were Divided into Four Geographic Categories*

- (1) Major city CoCs (n=48) cover the CoCs that contain one of the 50 largest cities in the United States. In two cases (Phoenix and Mesa, AZ, and Arlington and Fort Worth, TX), two large cities were located in the same CoC.
- (2) Other Largely Urban CoCs (n= 59) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in an urbanized area within a principal city within the CoC (but excludes the nation's largest cities).
- (3) Largely Suburban CoCs (n= 167) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in suburban areas, defined as urbanized areas outside of a principal city or urban clusters within 10 miles of urbanized areas.
- (4) Largely Rural CoCs (n= 109) are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in urban clusters that are more than 10 miles from an urbanized area or in Census-defined rural territories.

*Note: These definitions have been adapted from definitions used by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics to characterize the locations of schools.*

#### Exhibit 6-7. Sheltered Chronically Homeless Individuals by Geographic Category

	Number of CoCs	Chronically Homeless People in Sheltered Locations	Distribution across CoC Type	Percent of Sheltered Individuals who are Chronically Homeless
Total	383	44,254	100	22.8%
Major Cities	48	23,891	54.0%	24.0%
Other Urban CoCs	59	4,572	10.3%	28.3%
Suburban CoCs	166	10,442	23.6%	22.5%
Rural CoCs	109	5,349	12.1%	16.6%
Note: Excludes PR and U.S. Territories				

**Exhibit 6-8. CoCs with the Largest Number of Chronic Homeless People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness by Geographic Category, 2021**

CoC Name	Chronically Homeless People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness, 2021	CoC Name	Chronically Homeless People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness, 2021
<b>Major Cities</b>		<b>Other Largely Urban CoCs</b>	
New York City	5,106	Saint Paul/Ramsey County, MN	445
Los Angeles City & County, CA	2,821	Oxnard, San Buenaventura/Ventura County, CA	332
San Francisco, CA	1,600	Santa Rosa, Petaluma/Sonoma County, CA	224
Seattle/King County, WA	1,188	Anchorage, AK	218
District of Columbia	1,159	St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Largo/Pinellas County, FL	207
<b>Largely Suburban CoCs</b>		<b>Largely Rural CoCs</b>	
Salt Lake City & County, UT	509	Washington Balance of State	342
Santa Ana, Anaheim/Orange County, CA	431	Vermont Balance of State	286
Richmond/Contra Costa County, CA	351	Maine Statewide	275
Fairfax County, VA	282	Wisconsin Balance of State	209
Honolulu City and County, HI	265	Indiana Balance of State	180

- More than half of all chronically homeless individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness (54%) were in one of the nation's 50 largest cities. Nearly one-quarter were in a predominantly suburban CoC (24%), 12 percent were in largely rural CoCs, and the remainder (10%) were in largely urban CoCs that do not contain one of the 50 largest cities.
- CoCs that were largely urban but did not contain one of the nation's largest cities had the highest percent of sheltered individuals with chronic patterns of homelessness (28%). Largely rural CoCs had the lowest percentage of chronic homelessness among sheltered individuals (17%).
- New York City had the largest number of sheltered chronically homeless individuals in the country (5,106 people), alone representing 12 percent of all sheltered people with chronic patterns of homelessness in the United States. Los Angeles, CA had the second largest number, with 2,821 sheltered chronically homeless individuals, representing six percent of the national total. While New York City had by far the largest number, chronically homeless individuals represented only 16 percent of all sheltered individuals. Meanwhile, in Los Angeles chronically homeless individuals accounted for 32 percent of all sheltered individuals.

**Exhibit 6-9 Change in Sheltered Homelessness and Bed Inventory by Geographic Category, 2020-2021**

	Change in sheltered chronically homelessness, from 2020 to 2021	Percent change in sheltered chronically homelessness, from 2020 to 2021
Total	7,238	19.6%
Major Cities	4,550	23.5%
Other Urban CoCs	1,092	31.4%

	<b>Change in sheltered chronically homelessness, from 2020 to 2021</b>	<b>Percent change in sheltered chronically homelessness, from 2020 to 2021</b>
Suburban CoCs	1,492	16.7%
Rural CoCs	104	2.0%

### **Changes over Time**

- The number of sheltered individuals with chronic patterns of homelessness increased in all geography categories between 2020 and 2021. The largest increases occurred in major cities (4,550 or 24% more sheltered chronically homeless individuals) and other largely urban CoCs – those without one of the nation’s largest cities – with 1,092 or 31 percent more chronically homeless individuals in sheltered locations.
- Largely rural CoCs had the smallest change in the sheltered population, with an increase of just two percent 2020 and 2021, and largely suburban CoCs experienced increases of 17 percent.
- While a few major city CoCs experienced large increases in the number of sheltered chronically homeless individuals, more than half of all CoCs reported increases in this population ruling out the possibility that the trend exists only in those large CoCs.

## 7. National Inventory of Beds for Homeless and Formerly Homeless People

Exhibit 7-1: Project Types for Homeless and Formerly Homeless People

Shelter for Homeless People	Permanent Housing for Formerly Homeless People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Emergency Shelter (ES):</b> provides temporary or nightly shelter beds to people experiencing homelessness</li><li>• <b>Transitional Housing (TH):</b> provides homeless people with up to 24 months of shelter and supportive services</li><li>• <b>Safe Havens (SH):</b> provide temporary shelter and services to hard-to-serve individuals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Rapid Rehousing (RRH):</b> provides short-term rental assistance and stabilizing services to formerly homeless people</li><li>• <b>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):</b> provides long-term housing with supportive services for formerly homeless people with disabilities, and often those with chronic patterns of homelessness</li><li>• <b>Other Permanent Housing (OPH):</b> provides housing with or without services that is specifically for formerly homeless people but that does not require people to have a disability</li></ul>

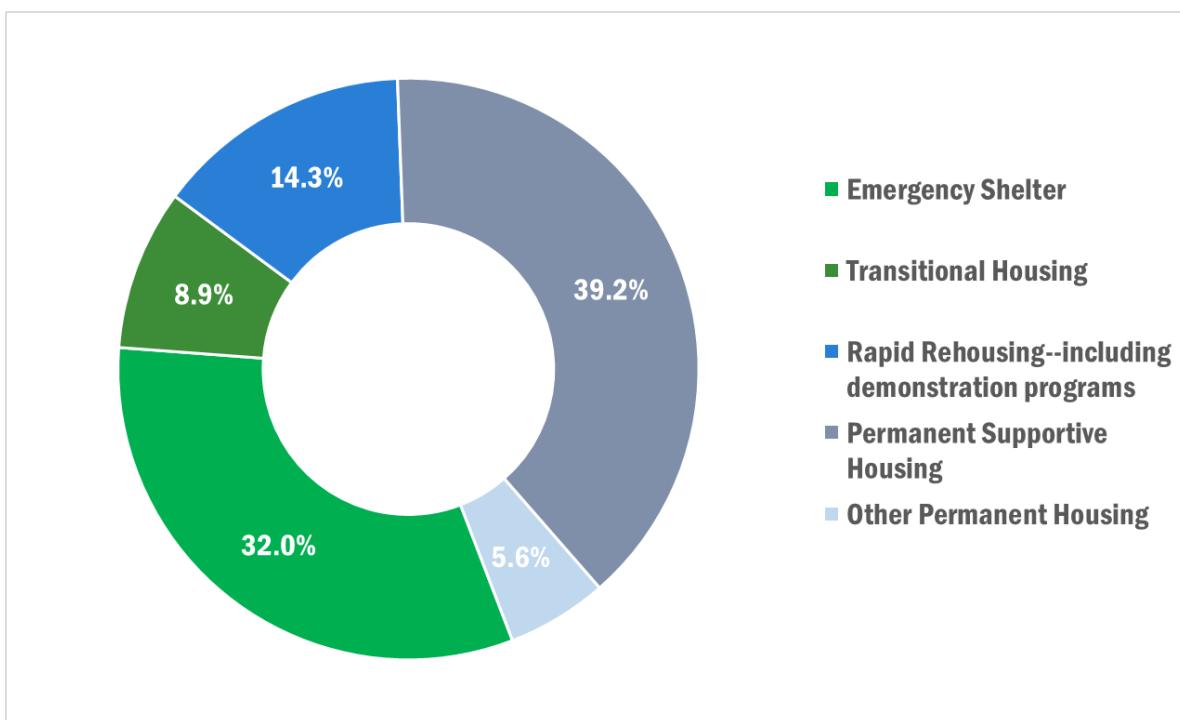
### Types of Programs in the National Inventory

Communities across the country submit data each year on their residential programs for people experiencing homelessness and their programs that help people leave homelessness. The two basic types of programs are shelter programs for homeless people and housing programs for formerly homeless people.

- 1) Shelter is intended to serve people currently experiencing homelessness and is comprised of two main types of programs, emergency shelters (ES) and transitional housing programs (TH). Conceptually, ES is shorter-term and provides less intensive services than TH.<sup>1</sup> Shelter also includes a small number of programs for hard-to-serve individuals called safe havens (SH). The sheltered data only reports on beds that are available during the entire year. While information on beds available during severe weather events (storms, fires, extreme cold), seasonal timeframes (open during a specific period of time), and beds made available when the number of people seeking shelter exceeds capacity (overflow beds), the focus of the analysis is on the year-round inventory for people experiencing homelessness. This information reflects the planned capacity communities rely on to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- 2) Permanent housing is intended to serve people who were homeless at the time they were admitted to a program. Once they enter the program, they are in housing that is permanent in the sense that they have a lease (or similar agreement) and may be able to stay in the same housing unit long-term. This category includes rapid rehousing (RRH), a short-term subsidy in housing the individual or family may be able to remain in after the subsidy ends; permanent supportive housing (PSH), housing with supportive services for formerly homeless people with disabilities; and other permanent housing (OPH), which also is intended for people leaving homelessness but is not restricted to people with disabilities.

<sup>1</sup> Some transitional housing programs provide housing in which the individual or family may be able to stay after the transitional period with intensive services ends (sometimes called “transition-in-place”), and some emergency shelters have intensive services. Communities decide how to categorize their programs when reporting data to HUD.

**Exhibit 7-2: Distribution of the National Inventory by Program Type, 2021**

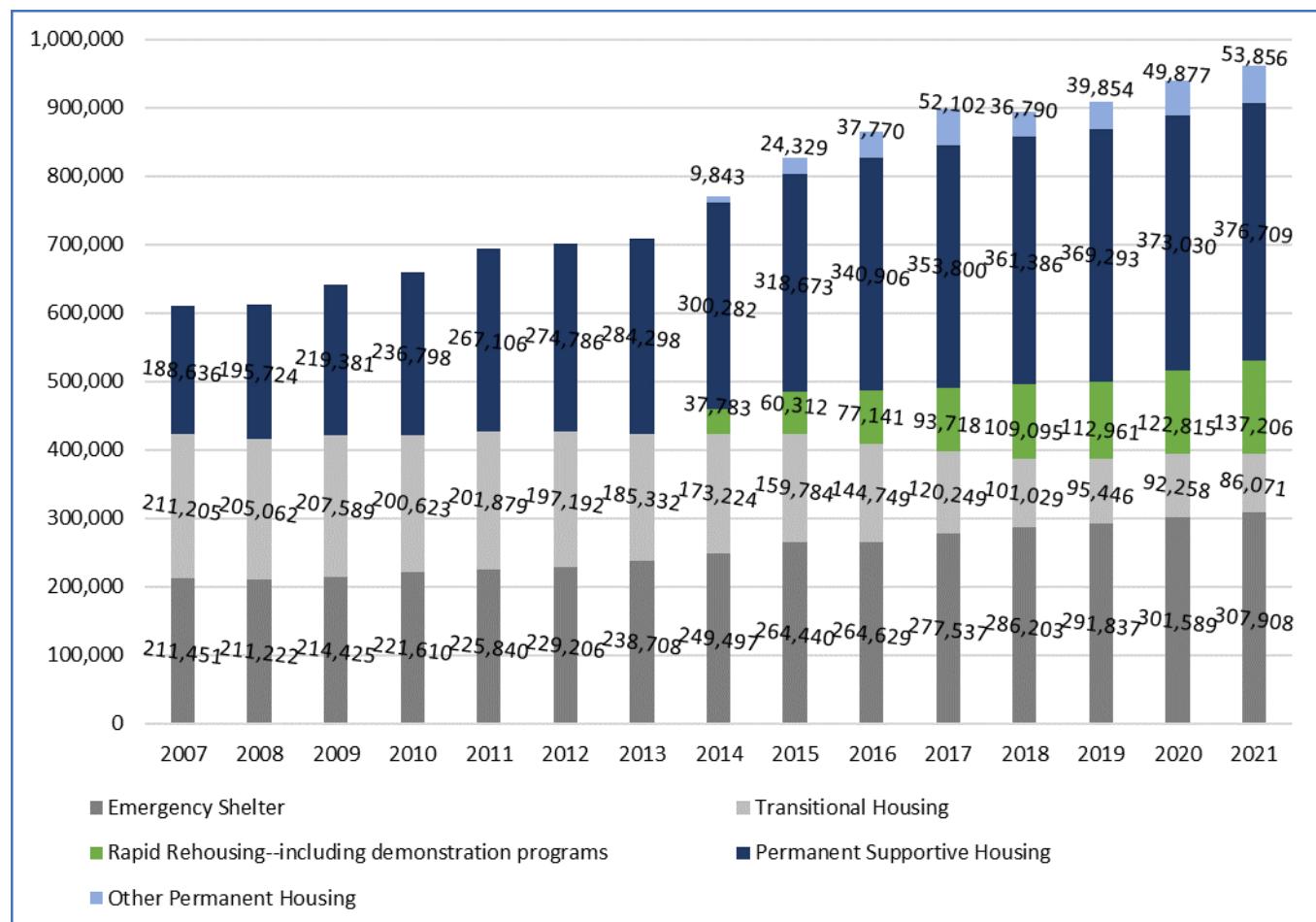


Note: a small percentage of safe haven beds (0.3%) are in the national inventory but not included in the exhibit.

#### ***The National Inventory as of January 2021***

- A total of 964,237 beds were dedicated to serving homeless or formerly homeless people in communities across the nation.
- Nearly six of every 10 beds (59%) were in permanent housing projects for formerly homeless people, while 41 percent provided shelter for people currently experiencing homelessness.
- Of the 396,466 beds for people currently experiencing homelessness, 78 percent were in emergency shelters, and 22 percent were in transitional housing programs. Less than one percent (0.6%) were provided through safe havens.
- Of the 567,771 beds in programs that help people leave homelessness, 66 percent were in permanent supportive housing, 24 percent were in rapid re-housing programs, and ten percent were in other permanent housing.

### Exhibit 7-3: Inventory of Beds in Shelters and Permanent Supportive Housing, 2007-2021



Note: The small share of Safe Haven beds (0.3%) is not included in this exhibit.

#### Changes to the National Inventory, 2007-2021

- The growth in the national inventory has been driven by increases in permanent housing beds for formerly homeless people. In 2021, there were twice as many permanent supportive housing beds as there were in 2007 (188,073 more beds) and nearly three times as many rapid rehousing beds than there were in 2014 when those data were first reported (99,423 more beds).
- Between 2007 and 2021, the total number of beds for people experiencing homelessness dropped by six percent, driven by decreases in transitional housing. The number of beds in emergency shelter increased by 96,457 (or 46%), but this rise was outpaced by a decline in transitional housing beds (with 125,134 fewer beds or a 59% decrease).

**Exhibit 7-4: Change in National Inventory of Beds for Shelters and Permanent Housing, 2007-2021**

		Change 2020-2021		Change 2007-2021	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Beds	22,366	2.4%	352,945	57.7%	
Emergency Shelter	6,319	2.1%	96,457	45.6%	
Transitional Housing	-6,187	-6.7%	-125,134	-59.2%	
Safe Haven	185	8.0%			
Rapid Rehousing	14,391	11.7%			
Permanent Supportive Housing	3,679	1.0%	188,073	99.7%	
Other Permanent Housing	3,979	8.0%			

***Recent Changes to the National Inventory***

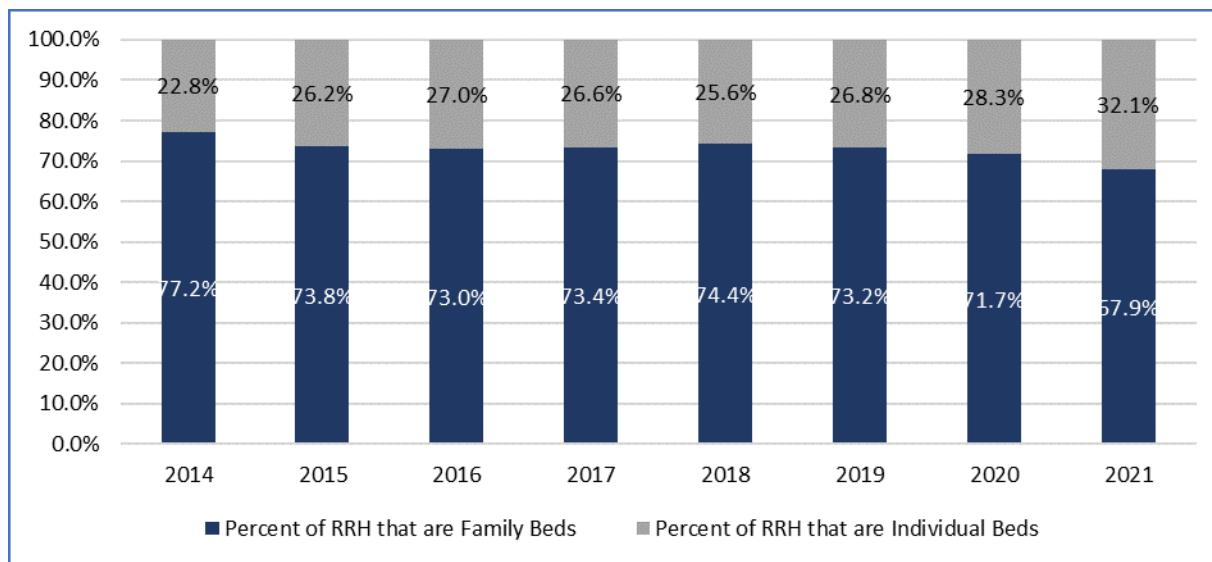
- While permanent supportive housing has doubled since 2007, the growth has slowed in recent years. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of permanent supportive housing beds increased by only one percent (or 3,679 beds). Meanwhile, the number of other permanent housing beds reported saw a more marked increase in the most recent year, growing by 8 percent or nearly 4,000 beds.
- Despite the apparent reduction in shelter use due to the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency shelter beds increased between 2020 and 2021. Beds in transitional housing programs continued to drop, by more than 6,000 beds or seven percent.
- Communities have reported steady increases in the number of rapid rehousing, reaching 137,206 beds in 2021. This represents a 12 percent increase in rapid rehousing beds since 2020, the largest increase of any bed type during this time period. This could reflect an increased reliance on rapid rehousing during the national pandemic. The HIC reports only occupied rapid rehousing beds, so this rise represents an increase in both inventory and people housed through this program type.

**Exhibit 7-5: Inventory of Beds for Individuals and Families, 2021**

Beds for Individuals		Beds for People in Families		Beds for Child-only Households		Total Year-Round Beds		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Emergency Shelter	165,961	53.9%	139,345	45.3%	2,602	0.8%	307,908	100.0%
Transitional Housing	46,156	53.6%	39,384	45.8%	531	0.6%	86,071	100.0%
Safe Haven	2,476	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2,476	100.0%
Rapid Rehousing	44,051	32.1%	92,984	67.8%	171	0.1%	137,206	100.0%
Permanent Supportive Housing	252,172	66.9%	124,471	33.0%	66	0.0%	376,709	100.0%

	Beds for Individuals		Beds for People in Families		Beds for Child-only Households		Total Year-Round Beds	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Other Permanent Housing	24,349	45.2%	29,455	54.7%	52	0.1%	53,856	100.0%
Total Beds	535,165	55.5%	425,628	44.1%	3,422	0.4%	964,237	100.0%

**Exhibit 7-6: Share of Rapid Rehousing Beds for Individuals and Families, 2014-2021**



Note: Chart does not include <1% of beds for child-only households

### Beds Serving Individuals and Families

Just as this report has separate sections on families (households with at least one adult and one child under 18) and on individuals (homeless people who are not part of a family), communities report on their program inventory in those categories.

- In 2021, less than half of emergency shelter beds were intended for families (45%), 54 percent were beds for people experiencing homelessness as adults without a child in the household (54%), and less than one percent were for children experiencing homelessness in households without an adult present.
- Similarly, 54 percent of transitional housing beds were targeted to individuals and 46 percent to families. Less than 1 percent were for child-only households.
- Rapid re-housing was initially designed as an intervention for families experiencing homelessness, but it has increasingly been used by communities to provide permanent housing to individuals as well. In 2021, 68 percent of rapid re-housing beds were occupied by people in families, and about a third (32%) of beds were for individuals. This represented a noted shift in the distribution of rapid rehousing beds as 23 percent were occupied by individuals in 2014 and 77 percent were occupied by people in families with children. This is in some part due to the increase in beds for veterans through the SSVF rapid rehousing program.
- More than two-thirds (67%) of permanent supportive housing beds were for individuals and 33 percent were targeted to people in families with children. This also represents a shift toward individuals – though more modest – in the distribution of beds. In 2007, 62 percent of PSH beds were

targeted to individuals and 38 percent to families. Individuals have always been more likely to have had chronic patterns of homelessness. In 2021, 86 percent of all sheltered people with chronic patterns of homelessness were individuals and 23 percent of all sheltered individuals had chronic patterns of homelessness.

- The percentage of other permanent housing—beds without a restriction to people with disabilities—reported by communities to be for families is higher, 55 percent.

#### Exhibit 7-7: Inventory of Beds for Special Populations, 2021

Bed Type	Total Beds	Beds for People with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness		Beds for Veterans		Beds for Youth	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Emergency Shelter	307,908			4,356	1.4%	6,633	2.2%
Transitional Housing	86,071			12,382	14.4%	9,513	11.1%
Safe Haven	2,476			1,505	60.8%	10	0.4%
Rapid Rehousing	137,206			16,199	11.8%	7,493	5.5%
Permanent Supportive Housing	376,709	173,457	46.0%	104,705	27.8%	4,909	1.3%
Other Permanent Housing	53,856			1,943	3.6%	992	1.8%
Total Beds	964,237	173,457	18.0%	141,090	14.6%	29,550	3.1%

#### Beds for Targeted to Veterans and Youth

- Fifteen percent of all beds in the national inventory (141,090 beds in total) were dedicated to veterans experiencing homelessness and their family members. Nearly three quarters of beds for veterans (74%) were in permanent supportive housing programs. While small in number, more than six of every ten safe haven beds were dedicated to veterans (1,505 out of 2,487 beds).
- In 2021, 29,550 beds were for unaccompanied youth or for families with young parents (all members of the household are under the age of 25). Of these beds, 55 percent were for youth currently experiencing homelessness, with 32 percent in transitional housing programs and 22 percent in emergency shelters. Overall, beds targeted to youth represented only three percent of the total inventory of beds available for people experiencing homelessness.
- The total number of beds dedicated to veterans increased between 2020 and 2021 across all project types, by 2,532 beds overall or two percent. Increases occurred evenly across all beds for veterans currently experiencing homelessness and permanent housing beds for formerly homeless veterans.
- The total number of beds for youth also increased, by 2,306 beds. The increase in permanent housing beds for youth drove this overall increase, with 17 percent more youth dedicated beds in rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing programs in 2021 than in 2020. The increase in beds for youth in sheltered locations was much more modest (2%).

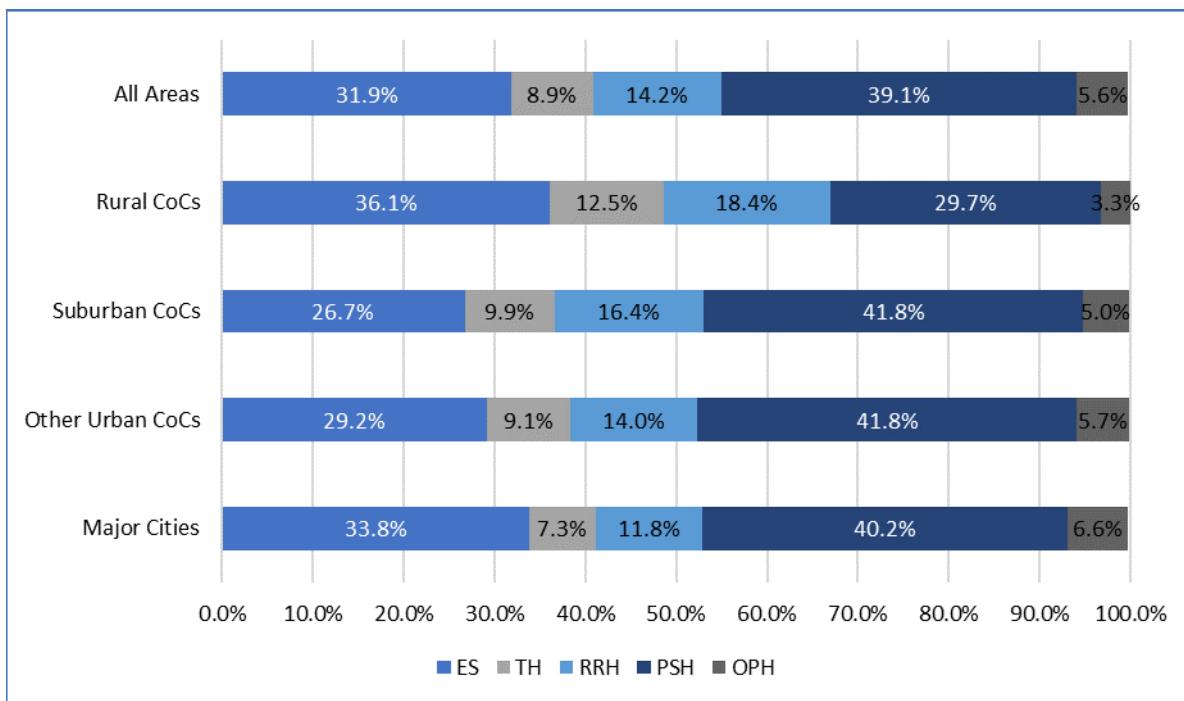
**Exhibit 7-8: Inventory of PSH Beds for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness, 2007-2021**

Year	Number of Beds			
	Change 2020-2021		Change 2007–2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2007			37,807	
2008			42,298	
2009			50,602	
2010			55,256	
2011			67,964	
2012			74,693	
2013			81,666	
2014			94,282	
2015			95,066	
2016			111,390	
2017			149,005	
2018			168,503	
2019			181,505	
2020			179,569	
2021			173,457	
	Change 2020-2021		Change 2007–2021	
PSH Beds for Chronically Homeless People	-6,112	-3.4%	135,650	358.8%

***Beds Targeted to Individuals with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness***

- For the first time since these data were collected, the number of permanent supportive housing beds for people with chronic patterns of homelessness declined. In 2021, there were 173,457 permanent supportive housing beds for people with chronic patterns of homelessness, representing 46 percent of beds in PSH programs (out of 376,709 total beds). This represents a three percent decline in the number of PSH beds for the chronic homeless population since 2020, which is especially notable considering the 20 percent rise in sheltered chronically homeless individuals.
- However, the number of PSH beds in 2021 for people with chronic patterns of homelessness was more than four times greater in 2021 than in 2007, when these data were first collected (a 359% increase).

**Exhibit 7-9: Inventory of Beds by Program Type and CoC Category, 2021\***



\*Excludes SH, which accounts for between 0.1% and 0.3% of beds across the four CoC categories.

### *Beds by CoC Category, 2021*

#### *Continuums of Care (CoC) were divided into four geographic categories<sup>2</sup>*

- (1) Major city CoCs (n=48) are CoCs that contain one of the 50 largest cities in the United States. In two cases, Phoenix and Mesa, AZ, and Arlington and Fort Worth, TX, two of the largest US cities are located in the same CoC.
- (2) Other largely urban CoCs (n=59) are CoCs in which the population lives predominately in an urbanized area within the CoC's principal city or cities, but the CoCs does not include one of the nation's 50 largest cities.
- (3) Largely suburban CoCs (n=167) are CoCs in which the population lives predominantly in suburban areas, defined as urbanized areas outside of a principal city or urban clusters within 10 miles of urbanized areas.
- (4) Largely rural CoCs (n=109) are CoCs in which the population lives predominately in urban clusters that are more than 10 miles from an urbanized area or in Census-defined rural areas.

*Note: These definitions have been adapted from definitions used by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics to characterize the locations of schools.*

- The distribution of beds for people currently experiencing homelessness varies modestly across categories of CoCs. All types of communities had many more emergency shelter beds than they did transitional housing beds in 2021. The difference was greatest in major city CoCs, where 81 percent of beds for people experiencing homelessness were in emergency shelters and only 18 percent in

<sup>2</sup> CoCs located in PR and U.S. Territories were excluded from the CoC Category analysis.

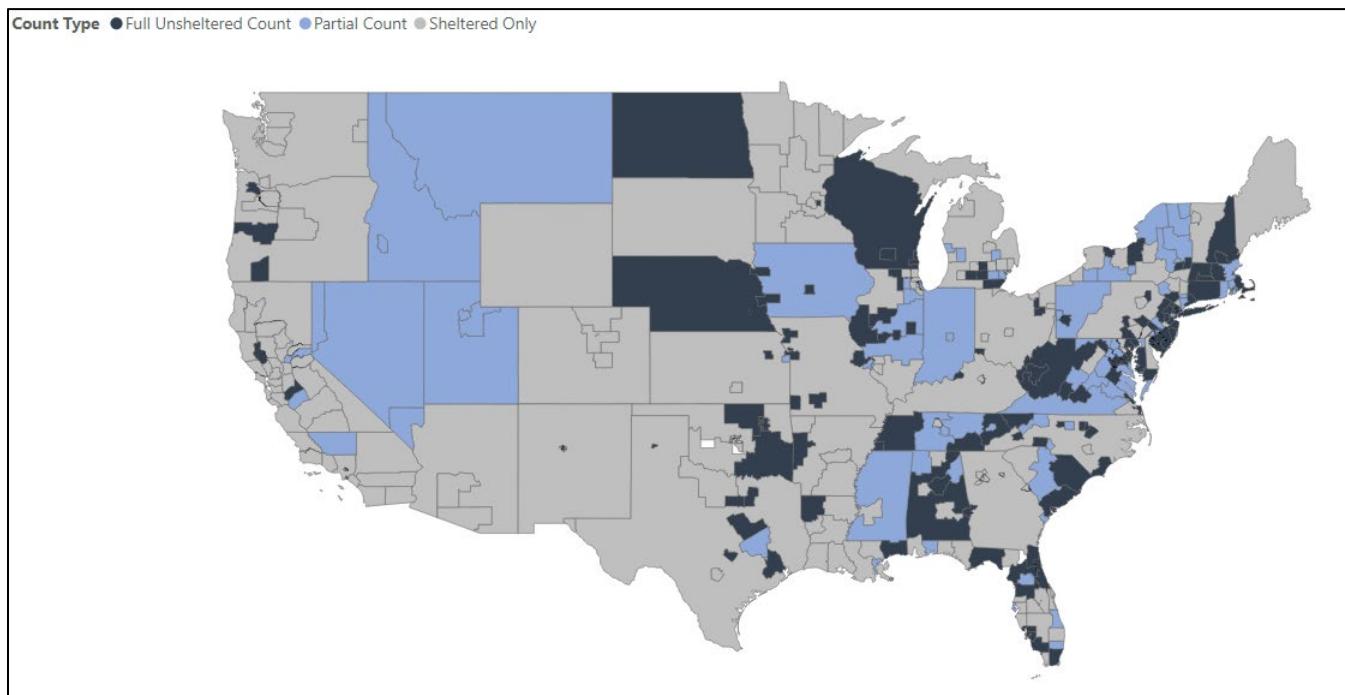
transitional housing programs. Largely suburban CoCs had the highest percentage of transitional housing beds, accounting for 27 percent of beds for people experiencing homelessness.

- Across all CoC categories, permanent supportive housing was the dominant type of permanent housing for formerly homeless people. Major cities had the highest percentage of PSH beds among the permanent housing inventory, with 69 percent. Unlike the other project types, RRH beds accounted for a higher share of the overall bed inventory in all CoC types in 2021 than they did in 2020.
- Rapid re-housing beds were a relatively larger share of permanent housing beds in rural CoCs than across all categories of CoCs (36% vs. 24%).

## A. Closer Look at CoCs that Conducted Unsheltered Counts

Exhibit 8-1 shows the 210 communities that submitted unsheltered counts for their CoC in 2021 and 2020, representing 54 percent of all CoCs. Most (138 CoCs) conducted a full unsheltered count, including the household type and demographics of people sleeping outside. The remaining 72 CoCs conducted “partial” counts. CoCs that conducted partial counts reported a total number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness but did not include all characteristics or household types associated with those counted. CoCs that conducted partial counts are included in the overview of how unsheltered homelessness changed between January 2020 and January 2021 but not in the closer examination of the characteristics of the unsheltered population in 2021.

**Exhibit A-1 CoCs by Unsheltered Count Type, 2021**



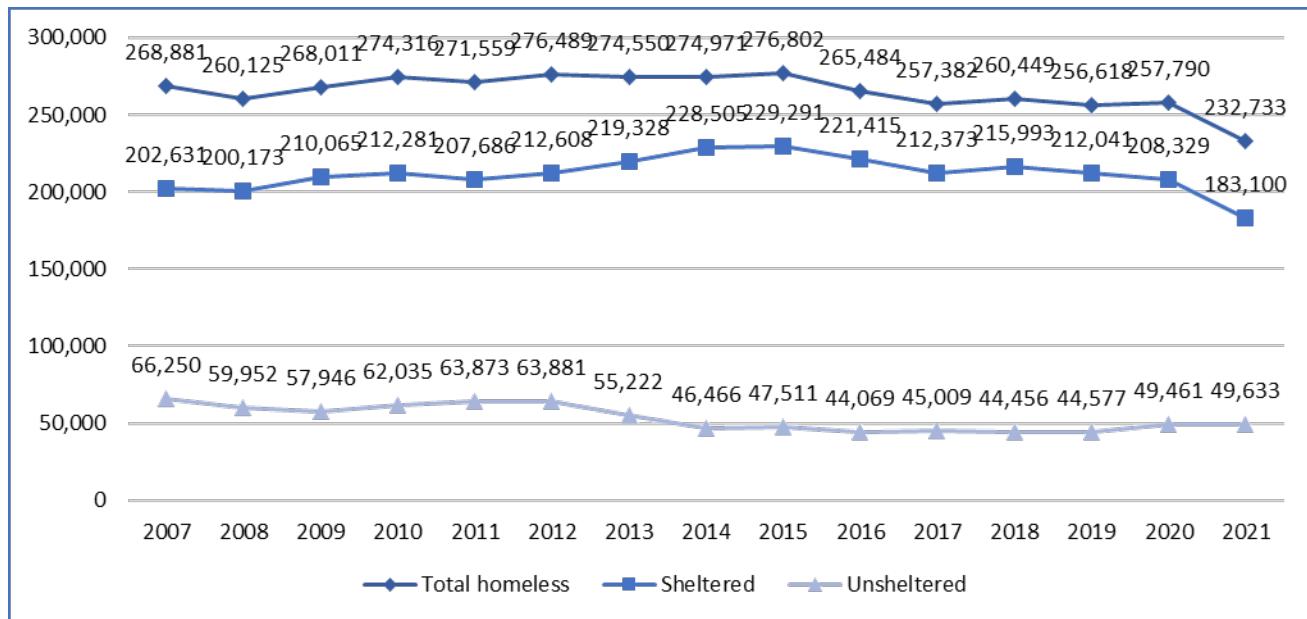
The 210 communities that conducted unsheltered counts in both 2020 and 2021 accounted for only 22 percent of the 2020 unsheltered population. The distribution of communities that conducted any unsheltered count in 2021 varies from the distribution of all CoCs. Suburban communities are slightly overrepresented and rural communities are slightly underrepresented among those that did any type of unsheltered count, partial or full. Largely urban and largely suburban CoCs had the highest percentage of communities within those categories conducting counts in 2021 (63 and 62 percent). Largely rural CoCs had the lowest percentage of CoCs conducting unsheltered counts, with 43 percent.

**Exhibit A-2. Distribution of the Sample of CoCs that Conducted Unsheltered Counts in 2021**

	All CoCs	Distribution of all CoCs	Conducted any Unsheltered Count	Distribution of CoCs that Conducted any Unsheltered Count	Percent within Geographic Category that Conducted any Unsheltered Count
<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>54.1%</b>
Major Cities	48	12.4%	23	11.0%	47.9%
Other Largely Urban CoCs	59	15.2%	37	17.6%	62.7%
Largely Suburban CoCs	166	42.8%	103	49.0%	62.0%
Largely Rural CoCs	109	28.1%	47	22.4%	43.1%

### A.1 How did Homelessness Change in this Small Community Sample?

**Exhibit A-3. Number of People Experiencing Homelessness in the 210 Communities that Conducted Unsheltered Counts in 2021, 2007-2021**

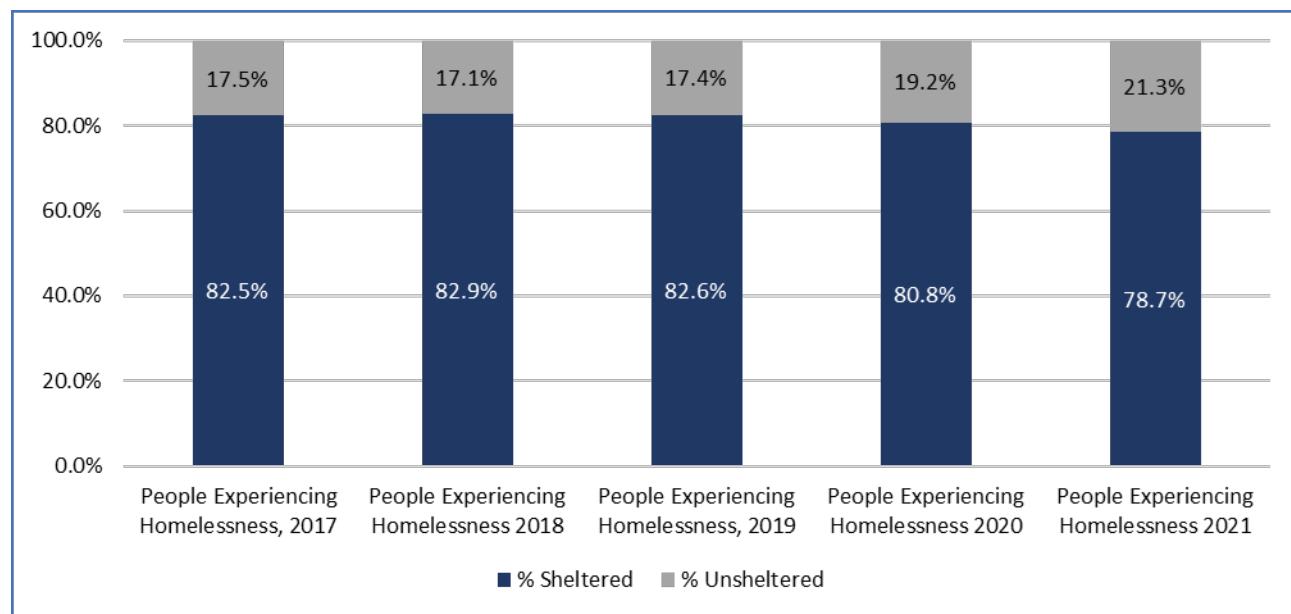


**Exhibit A-4. Change in Homelessness in Sample of 210 Communities, 2007-2021**

	Change from 2020 to 2021	Percent change from 2020 to 2021	Change from 2010 to 2021	Percent change from 2010 to 2021	Change from 2007 to 2021	Percent change from 2007 to 2021
Total homeless	-25,057	-9.7%	-41,583	-15.2%	-36,148	-13.4%
Sheltered	-25,229	-12.1%	-29,181	-13.7%	-19,531	-9.6%
Unsheltered	172	0.3%	-12,402	-20.0%	-16,617	-25.1%

In January 2021, 232,733 people were experiencing homelessness in the 210 CoCs that conducted any type of unsheltered count. Across those communities, the total number of people experiencing homelessness declined between 2020 and 2021 (by 10% or 25,057 people), driven by a decline in the sheltered population (by 12% or 25,229 people). Due to the global pandemic, many emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe haven programs either reduced their numbers of beds to meet CDC guidance or closed entirely. The shelter programs across these 210 communities reduced their capacity by four percent and shifted existing shelter capacity toward hotel/motel vouchers, as noted in Section 1.1. At the same time, the number of occupied rapid rehousing beds increased by 14 percent, possibly reflecting community decisions to shift resources to scattered-site programs. This is supported by a review of CoC notes that is described later in this section.

**Exhibit A-5. Percentage of People Experiencing Homelessness who are Sheltered and Unsheltered, 2017-2021**



Between 2020 and 2021, the unsheltered population in this sample of communities remained relatively flat, increasing by 172 people (or less than 1%). Approximately 79 percent of people experiencing homelessness (or 183,100 people) were staying in sheltered locations and 21 percent in unsheltered locations. The share of people in unsheltered locations was higher than it was in 2020 for this group of communities, continuing a shift that began between 2019 and 2020. This recent shift appears to be driven by communities that are not major cities.

**Exhibit A-6. Change in Sheltered and Unsheltered Homelessness in 210 Communities by Geography Type, 2020-2021**

	Total Change		Sheltered Change		Unsheltered Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Across Sample of CoCs	-25,057	-9.7%	-25,229	-12.1%	172	0.3%
Sample of Major Cities	-18,261	-13.2%	-15,080	-12.8%	-3,181	-15.7%
Sample of Other Largely Urban CoCs	178	0.8%	-1,867	-11.1%	2,045	34.3%
Sample of Suburban CoCs	-5,663	-8.1%	-5,810	-10.7%	817	5.6%
Sample of Rural CoCs	-1,981	-7.2%	-2,472	-13.1%	491	5.6%

The unsheltered population dropped by 3,181 people (or 16%) in the 23 major city CoCs that conducted unsheltered counts but increased in the other geography types between 2020 and 2021. However, these data are not representative, and a review of CoC notes on the 2021 PIT indicate that most major city CoCs believe that changes to methods used in response to the pandemic contributed to fewer people identified in unsheltered locations. A major northeastern city, for example, recorded 1,521 fewer people found sleeping outside in January 2021 than in January 2020. A review of notes provided on the unsheltered methodology used by this CoC attributes the large decrease to a few things: the first is a changed methodology to account for the safety of enumerators and people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. While the CoC itself cautions a comparison to prior data, it also notes the expanded shelter offerings due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing outreach to engage people experiencing unsheltered homelessness as possibly relevant to the reduced unsheltered number. A major midwestern city also recorded a decrease (of 827 people or 54%) and attributed the entire decrease to methodological changes in response to the pandemic.

Unsheltered homelessness increased by 34 percent in largely urban CoCs without a major city, and by six percent in both largely suburban and rural CoCs. A midsized city in the Pacific Northwest that had a 92 percent rise in people experiencing unsheltered homelessness reported that shelters were thinned out to respond to COVID. The CoC organized alternative responses for those that had to leave the shelter, many of which were considered unsheltered locations such as campsites. The CoC also noted that they believe the 2021 unsheltered count relied on an improved methodology, and expressed confidence in the count result.

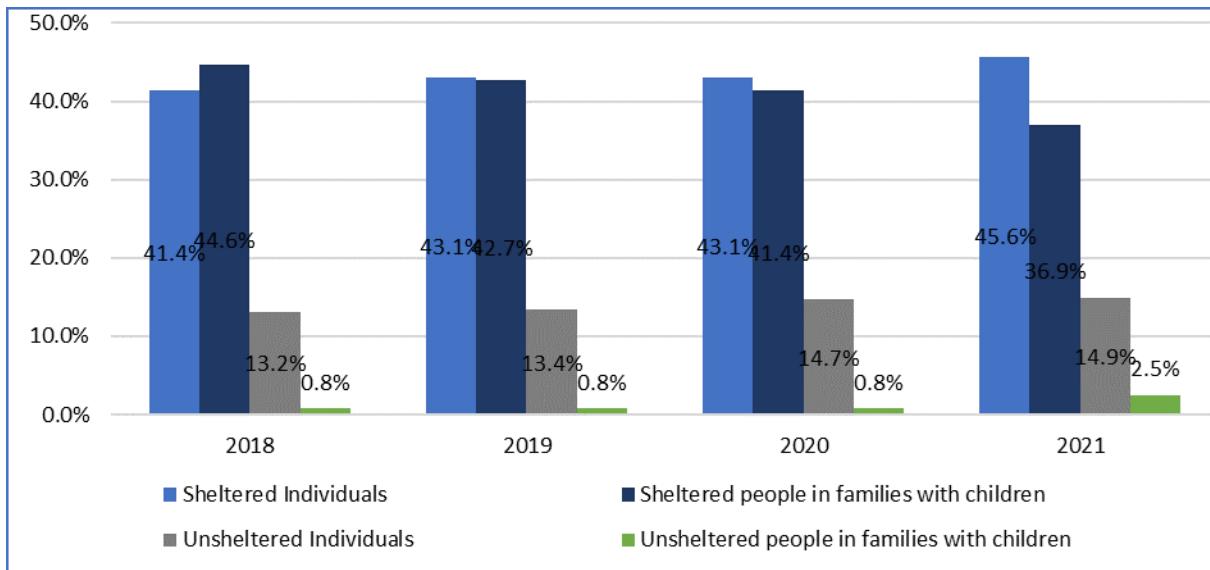
## A.2 What were the Household Characteristics of the Unsheltered Population in the Small Sample of Communities that Conducted Full Unsheltered Counts?

The following section explores the household characteristics of the 138 communities that conducted full unsheltered counts in 2021 and in 2020. Rural CoCs are underrepresented in this sample while suburban and other largely urban CoCs were slightly overrepresented.

**Exhibit A-7. Geographic Distribution of 138 CoCs with Full Unsheltered Count Data, 2021**

	All CoCs	Distribution of all CoCs	Conducted Full Unsheltered Counts	Distribution of CoCs that Conducted Full Unsheltered Counts	Percent within Geographic Category that Conducted Full Unsheltered Counts
<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>35.6%</b>
Major Cities	48	12.4%	17	12.3%	35.4%
Other Urban CoCs	59	15.2%	29	21.0%	49.2%
Suburban CoCs	166	42.8%	66	47.8%	39.8%
Rural CoCs	109	28.1%	26	18.8%	23.9%

**Exhibit A-8. Sheltered and Unsheltered Populations by Household Type in Sample Communities, 2018-2021**



**Exhibit A-9. Change in Unsheltered Population in 138 Communities by Household Type, 2021**

	Total Unsheltered Change		Unsheltered Individuals Change		Unsheltered People in Families with Children Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Across Sample of CoCs	-78	-0.3%	-2,681	-9.7%	2,603	164.2%
Sample of Major Cities	-1,488	-11.2%	-2,402	-18.1%	914	1,661.8%
Sample of Other Largely Urban CoCs	1,132	38.1%	810	28.7%	322	213.2%
Sample of Suburban CoCs	-202	-2.5%	-1,548	-20.0%	1,346	260.9%
Sample of Rural CoCs	480	10.1%	459	11.9%	21	2.4%

**Exhibit A-10 Unsheltered Population by Household Type and Geography Type, 2020-2021**

	2020		2021	
	Percent of Unsheltered Population who are in Families with Children	Percent of Unsheltered Population who are Individuals	Percent of Unsheltered Population who are in Families with Children	Percent of Unsheltered Population who are Individuals
Total	5.4%	94.6%	14.3%	85.7%
Major Cities	0.4%	99.6%	8.2%	91.8%
Other Urban CoCs	5.1%	94.9%	11.5%	88.5%
Suburban CoCs	6.3%	93.7%	23.2%	76.8%
Rural CoCs	18.2%	81.8%	17.0%	83.0%

In the sample of 138 communities that conducted full unsheltered counts in both 2020 and 2021, nearly half of people experiencing homelessness (46%) were individuals staying in sheltered locations, 37 percent were people in families with children staying in sheltered locations, 15 percent were unsheltered individuals, and three percent were unsheltered people in families with children. Between 2020 and 2021, there were shifts in the proportion of people experiencing homelessness by shelter status and household type in these communities. Between 2020 and 2021, the share of individuals in sheltered locations remained largely the same, with a slightly higher share of individuals staying in shelters in 2021 than in 2020 (47% versus 43%). However, there were marked changes in the proportion of the population that were in families during the same time period – a decrease in the share of sheltered people in families with children and an increase in unsheltered people in families with children. Most notably, the share of families experiencing unsheltered homelessness in these communities increased from what has been less than one percent for several years to about three percent.

In examining the unsheltered population by household type, these shifts were even clearer. Across all 138 communities, the unsheltered population remained largely unchanged, decreasing by 78 people or less than one percent. The number of people counted in unsheltered locations increased in rural and other largely urban CoCs and decreased in major cities and suburbs. The change in the number of unsheltered individuals mirrored that of all unsheltered people. However, in each geographic category the number of unsheltered people in families increased. Across all CoCs, the number increased by 2,603 people or 164 percent. The 17 major cities included in this sample experienced the largest percentage increase in unsheltered people in families (1,661% or 914 more people) while the 66 largely suburban communities experienced the largest absolute increase (1,346 more people or 261%). However, a single largely suburban community in California is responsible for nearly all of this increase. The CoC reported an increase of more than 1,400 people in families with children staying outdoors. While the community confirmed the data to be accurate, they attributed the increase to the use of HMIS and alternative data collection methodologies.

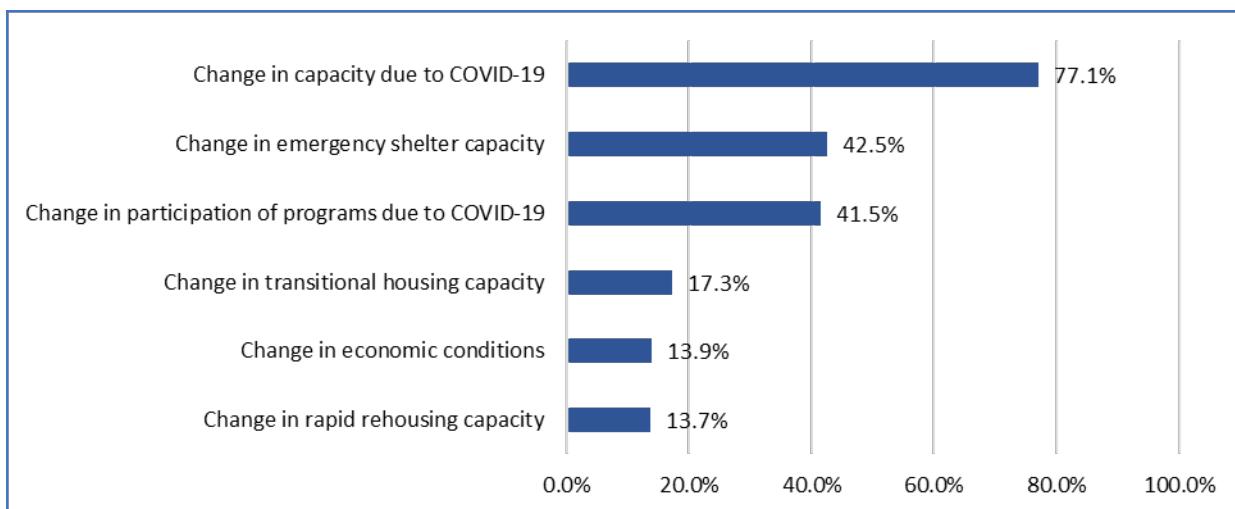
People in families with children also accounted for a larger share of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in 2021 than in nearly all years prior. Across the 138-community sample, 5 percent of the unsheltered population were people in families in 2020 compared to 14 percent in 2021. These increases are experienced – to varying degrees – across all geographic types except for rural areas. Largely suburban CoCs experienced the most dramatic increase, as 23 percent of the unsheltered population were in families with children in 2021 compared to just six percent in 2020. Again, this large shift is likely due to a single CoC in this geographic category. Major cities and the 29 other largely urban CoCs both experienced increases in the share of families among their unsheltered population, reporting 8 percent and 12 percent in 2021 compared with less than one percent and five percent the year prior.

As has been noted throughout this report, the decreases in sheltered family homelessness can potentially be attributed to a number of things, including the contraction of shelters, a hesitance to seek out congregate shelter options during a global pandemic, prevention resources, and the eviction moratorium and other measures that strengthened the safety net, especially for working people and families with children. However – and while not representative – the analysis of this subset of communities suggests that some of the families that might have stayed in shelters instead chose to sleep in places not intended for human habitation. The next section explores community notes and responses to better understand these data.

### A.3. What did communities say about their 2021 point-in-time counts?

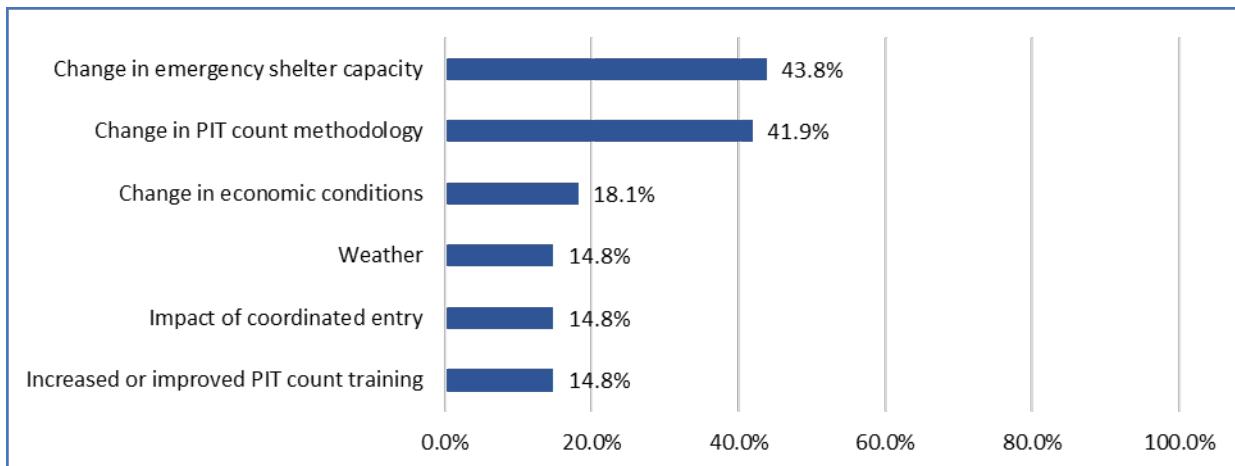
As a part of data submission, communities are asked to respond to questions related to their methodologies, including selecting from a pre-set list of reasons for any large shifts in populations for both the sheltered and unsheltered counts. As reported in previous sections, the sheltered populations declined between 2020 and 2021. Not surprisingly, the most frequently selected reason (by 77% of CoCs) was a change in overall capacity in response to COVID-19. More than four in 10 specifically identified a change in emergency shelter capacity (43%), and 42 percent identified a change in programs that participated in the sheltered count in 2021 (i.e., some programs may not have provided data on people staying there on the night of the count). Other common reasons were changes in transitional housing capacity and changes in economic conditions. This helps to contextualize some of the contradictory findings from the analysis of HIC data, where beds seemingly increased during the height of the pandemic. It may have been that the number of beds reported did not account for the reduction in actual availability in all communities.

**Exhibit A-11 Most Frequently Selected Reasons for Changes in Sheltered Population (n=388), 2021**



CoCs also selected reasons for changes in their unsheltered populations. The two most commonly selected reasons for changes in the unsheltered population by those 210 communities that conducted an unsheltered count were changes in emergency shelter capacity (44%) and changes in PIT count methodology (42%). Changes in economic condition was selected by 18 percent of communities, and 15 percent of communities selected weather, coordinated entry, and increased or improved PIT count training as likely reasons for their change in their unsheltered counts.

## Exhibit A-12 Most Frequently Selected Reasons for Changes in Unsheltered Population (n=210), 2021



In addition to responding to discrete questions related to their counts, communities are also asked to submit notes related to changed methodologies, large shifts in populations, and any aberrations in their data. In reviewing these notes from CoCs, they largely supported the reasons they selected in response to close-ended questions, but they added additional context. Five main themes that can help to contextualize changes in sheltered and unsheltered data are:

- Methodological changes to the unsheltered PIT count;
- Changes to shelter capacity to comply with social distancing requirements;
- New hotel/motel programs and vouchers (increase in non-congregate shelters);
- Prioritizing Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH); and
- Stemmed inflow into the homeless system.

These common themes are described in brief and are focused on their impact on the 2021 point in time counts.

### Methodological Changes

*"Reduced shelter capacity due to COVID-19 restrictions and reduced volunteers for canvassing due to COVID-19 restrictions [led to changes in] sheltered and unsheltered individuals. Many sheltered and unsheltered individuals refused the survey due to COVID exposure concerns despite social-distancing and masks being offered. For the known individuals, HMIS data was used to complete their surveys, for unknown individuals no survey could be completed. This resulted in lower PIT count numbers."*

people experiencing homelessness on the night of the count (increasing from 7 to 14 days following the

Ahead of the 2021 unsheltered count, HUD allowed several variances to the approved PIT methodologies. The most notable change was that CoCs were given the option to just conduct a head count without any household or demographic information required on people counted. Additional variances included approving observation-only counts without follow up surveys, an extended period of time to conduct surveys with

PIT count), and the emphasis on sampling instead of a full coverage count. CoCs identified a changing methodology as resulting in both smaller and larger unsheltered counts. Methodologically related reasons for decreases included use of modified counts in response to the pandemic. Many CoCs that conducted a modified unsheltered PIT count relied on **alternative data sources**, such as outreach data reported to HMIS (including by-name lists), or **modified surveys** that would limit face to face exposure. CoCs also noted that they had **fewer volunteers** than in previous years to help conduct the count which, in some cases, led to a reduction in the number of people identified. These factors yielded significant decreases in the unsheltered PIT count for many CoCs.

With respect to *increases* in the unsheltered PIT count due to methodological changes, many CoCs noted that the use of **alternative data sources** and the **extended PIT count** window allowed them to reach more people experiencing homelessness and **expanded their geographic reach**.

The fact that methodological changes could either lead to a decrease or increase in the unsheltered PIT count point to factors specific to individual CoCs that determined whether the reported a decrease or increase in their unsheltered PIT count. Factors such as number of volunteers, staff capacity, data collection tools and databases, outreach methods, and geographic size of the CoC were all mentioned as either hindering or facilitating CoCs' efforts to conduct the unsheltered PIT count.

## Adjusted Shelter Capacity and Composition

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*"Sheltered count for 2021 vs 2020 was down roughly 20%. The change is almost entirely attributable to lower program participation due to COVID-19. Clients regularly reported that they preferred to remain unsheltered rather than congregating indoors due to a fear of contracting the virus. The family shelter experienced a point in time drop of nearly 30 percent in terms of households and 40 percent in terms of individuals. Parents of children were especially hesitant to access congregate shelter at that time."*

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to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Many CoCs tried to combat the combined effects of pandemic-related restrictions and fears of people experiencing homelessness of contracting the virus by leveraging various state and federal funding sources to establish new motel/hotel voucher programs that would increase the availability of **non-congregate shelters**.

Some of the funding sources that CoCs listed as facilitating the establishment of these new hotel/motel voucher programs included CARES Act funding, state specific emergency management funding, FEMA funds, and the increased flexibility to use SSVF resources to shelter people awaiting placement more safely in hotels and motels (Emergency Housing Assistance). While in some CoCs this shift in resources was reflected in their reported inventory, it does not appear to have been universally updated in the HIC.

## Prioritization of RRH and PSH and Improved Coordinated Entry

Communities noted prioritizing the use of Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programming to address homelessness as common reasons for shifts in the point in time counts

The reduction in shelter capacity was noted across the board as being one of the main factors that contributed to an increased unsheltered count while simultaneously decreasing the sheltered count. For many shelters, compliance with CDC guidelines and COVID-19 social distancing requirements meant that they had to reduce the number of available beds. Many CoCs noted that shelters in their regions had to **reduce bed capacity** by up to 50 percent. In some cases, shelters **closed completely**

during the pandemic. CARES Act funding, such as ESG-CV, emphasized the use of these programs to house people safely and permanently. As a result, there was an **increase in RRH and PSH capacity** across the country. This is particularly true for rapid rehousing programs, which saw a 12 percent increase in overall capacity across the country between 2020 and 2021. Many communities reported that this focus on RRH and PSH led to significant decreases in their unsheltered counts as their communities used **coordinated entry** (some for the first time) to prioritize these programs for the most vulnerable populations.

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*"Our overall count of persons experiencing homelessness decreased due largely to increased rapid rehousing capacity and our CoC's reduction of first-time homelessness. This overall reduction impacted [emergency shelter] utilization."*

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people stayed in shelters to continue to engage with the outreach workers to help place them in permanent housing. In addition, many communities noted that a **lack of affordable housing** slowed their ability to place people in housing, thus increasing their sheltered counts. Other issues noted around placement in RRH were **limited provider capacity** and programs having **difficulty hiring additional staff**. The eviction moratorium, while critical to preventing people from becoming homeless, was also noted by several communities to have limited the availability of housing units that may have been otherwise available for rapid re-housing and scattered-site permanent supportive housing as a result of turnover of rental units.

Other communities attributed *decreases* in their sheltered population to the expansion of RRH resources and use of coordinated entry. For communities with a sufficient stock of available rental units, rapid rehousing placements were made quickly, reducing the number of people staying in shelter.

### **Stemmed Inflow into the Homeless System**

Communities widely reported fewer people seeking shelter for the first time in January 2021. While safety concerns likely contributed heavily to fewer people at risk of experiencing homelessness choosing to access shelter services during a global pandemic, three policy and program related changes were commonly identified by CoCs as stemming inflow into homelessness: the eviction moratorium, additional homelessness prevention resources, and shelter diversion.

#### ***Eviction Moratorium***

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*"On the night of the count, there were two eviction moratoriums in place: the federal CDC Eviction Moratorium and the NYS Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act. This reduced the need for emergency shelter as residents are remaining in rental properties, even if they have not been able to pay rent. Providers believe this is the primary reason for the reduced sheltered count this year."*

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The improved or expanded use of coordinated entry to prioritize RRH and, to a lesser extent, PSH for the unsheltered population also affected the sheltered counts, though the effect varied by community. Some communities reported that increased use of RRH and PSH led to an *increase* in their sheltered counts, as

In 2020, the CDC issued a moratorium on evictions across the country to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission by preventing homelessness and households doubling up. Many CoCs reported that the eviction moratorium allowed a significant number of families and individuals to stay in their homes. This prevented many people from entering homelessness and reduced the demand for shelter beds, thus decreasing the

sheltered count. Some states expanded their moratoriums to be even more inclusive than the federal mandate. That included New York, that state that experienced the largest decline in sheltered family homelessness between 2020 and 2021.

### ***Homelessness Prevention***

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*"Evictions for nonpayment have not yet had an impact on the homeless community in [mid-sized city in the Midwest]. This along with multiple added Homeless prevention funding projects [are] keeping clients housed without the need to enter homelessness."*

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the number of people accessing shelter. Other funding not specifically related to homelessness such as cash payments to households, expanded unemployment benefits, and an expanded childcare credit also helped at risk families avoid homelessness.

### ***Shelter Diversion***

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*"Due to fewer available beds, many shelters enhanced their diversion methods and increased problem-solving conversations at the front door."*

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Shelter diversion is a strategy for preventing households that have already lost their homes to quickly obtain stable housing so as to avoid entering emergency shelter. Diversion may take many forms: connecting people who have lost their housing to other permanent housing, placing them in non-congregate shelters such as hotels, or supporting their temporary residence with family or friends.

The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impacts on both the unsheltered and sheltered counts in January 2021. The themes discussed in this section are just a snapshot of the very complex and intersecting factors that contributed to the changes in the 2021 PIT count and could very possibly persist in 2022.

An increase in homelessness prevention resources also aided in stemming the flow into the homeless system in many communities. Funding explicitly for homelessness prevention, such as ESG-CV Homelessness Prevention available through the CARES Act, was widely noted by CoCs to have helped reduce

Expanded prevention resources were not able to prevent all households from experiencing crises that could lead to homelessness during the pandemic. In response, many CoCs increased the resources devoted to shelter diversion.