

Homelessness in Alachua County

Samuel Li

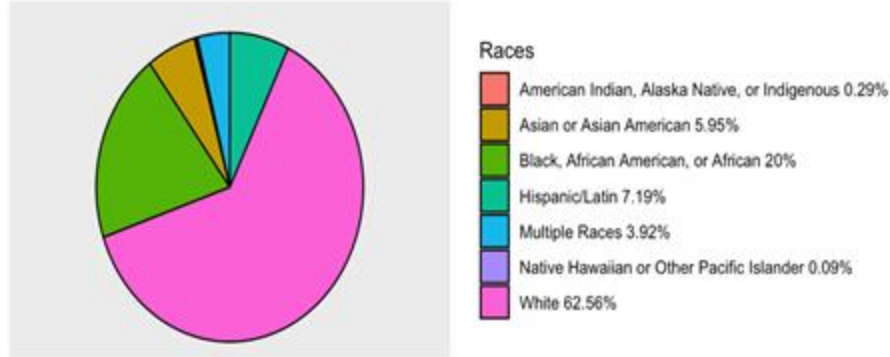


Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to get a holistic perspective of the homelessness rates in Alachua County. By reviewing and understanding the rates holistically, we hope to recommend sustainable changes that can be made in the future to benefit the citizens of Gainesville and help inform policies aimed to decrease homelessness rates in Alachua County.

Race vs Rates of Homelessness in Alachua County 2014-2021

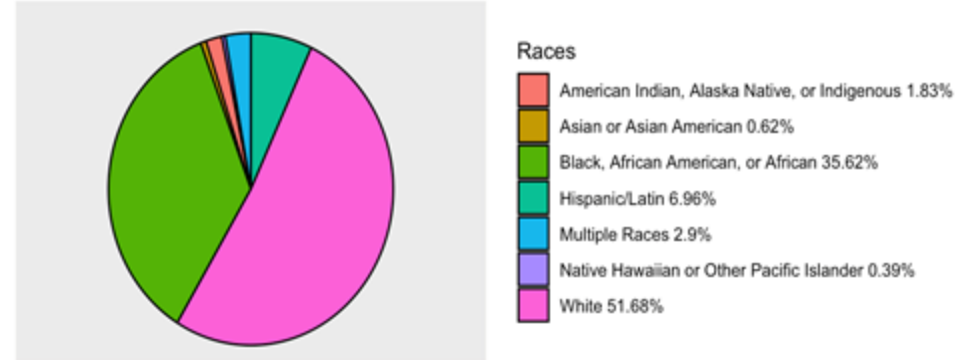
Pie Chart of Population by Race for Gainesville (2014-2021) (Average Method)



Population by Race:

- White: Majority (62.56%)
- African American: 20%
- Hispanic: 7.19%
- Asian American: 5.95%
- Multiple Races: 3.92%
- Native Hawaiian/American Indian/Indigenous: Less than 1%

Pie Chart of Homelessness by Race for Gainesville (2014-2021) (Average Method)



Homelessness by Race

- White: Majority (51.68%)
- African American: 35.62%
- Hispanic: 6.96%
- Asian American: 0.62%
- Multiple Races: 2.9%
- Native Hawaiian/American Indian/Indigenous: 2.22%

Race vs Rates of Homelessness in Alachua County

Continued

Hypothesis: The disproportionate homelessness rates amongst different races in Alachua County suggest that economic disparities, discrimination, and lack of access to affordable housing significantly contribute to homelessness.

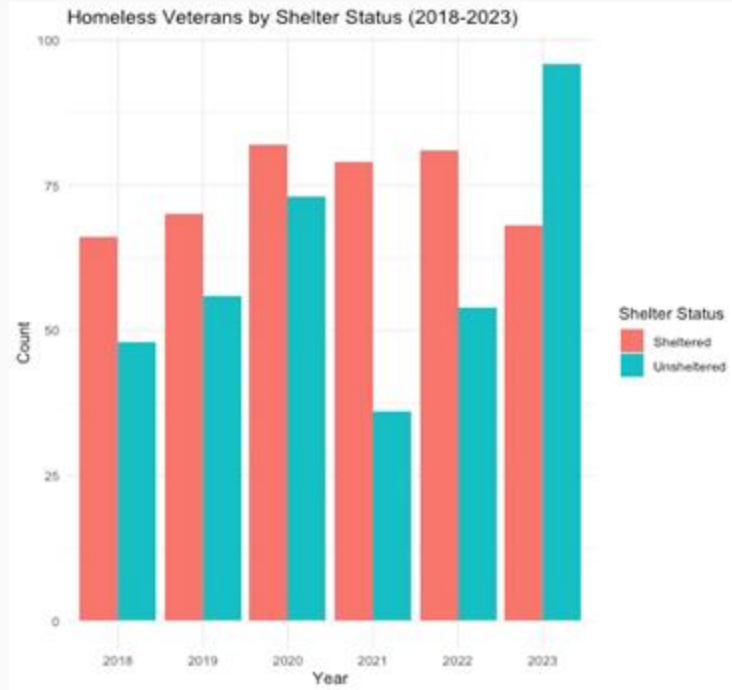
Conclusion:

- Some demographics exhibit differences in homelessness rates
- Other homelessness rates align with population representation
- Underscores systemic inequities
- Emphasizes the need for targeted interventions
- Failure of social and economic system to provide equal opportunity

Recommendation:

- Local, state, and federal interventions that explicitly address racism and equitable opportunity
- Investment in communities of color and making housing more affordable for all
- Diversifying staff and leadership, including representation and experience

Sheltered Veterans vs, Unsheltered Veterans from 2018-2023 in Alachua County



Sheltered Veterans vs, Unsheltered Veterans from 2018-2023 in Alachua County Continued

Hypothesis: Florida has been experiencing a housing affordability crisis exacerbated by COVID-19. With rising rents and limited affordable housing options, more veterans could have been pushed into homelessness due to financial constraints.

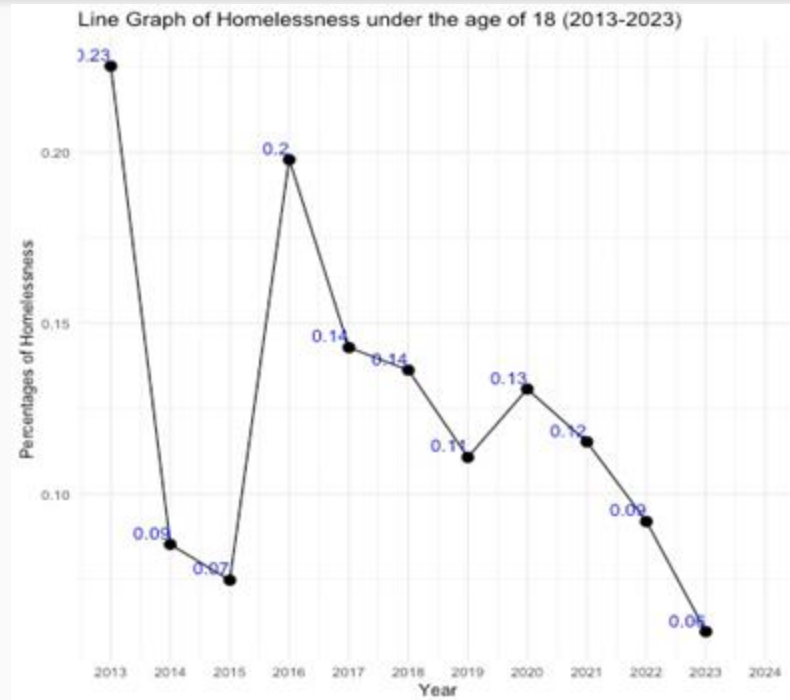
Conclusion:

- Increasing number of unsheltered veterans in Alachua County
- Number of sheltered veterans in Alachua County has remained constant for 5 years
 - Lowered significantly within the past year
- Need to enhance the capacity of existing shelters or establish additional shelters

Recommendation:

- Foster collaboration among government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders Implement targeted outreach programs to increase connection

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Under 18 between 2013-2023



Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Under 18 between 2013-2023

Hypothesis: Efforts to address youth homelessness have been effective over the past decade. Additionally, funding and expansion of support services tailored to homeless youth, including access to shelter, mental health services, education, and employment assistance have been emphasized at the local, state, and federal levels.

- An example is the House Bill 1577, Homeless Youth: Provides unaccompanied homeless youth with essential support, including free birth certificates, consent to medical care, and waiver of costs for obtaining licenses and driver education.

Conclusion:

- Overall decrease in homelessness among individuals under the age of 18 in Alachua County from 2013 to 2023
 - Youth homelessness reaching an all-time low in 2023

Recommendation:

- Continue funding and expanding support services tailored to homeless youth
 - Access to shelter, mental health services, education, and employment assistance
- Maintaining a system for monitoring and evaluating homelessness trends among minors
- Engage the community in efforts to combat youth homelessness
 - Awareness campaigns, volunteer opportunities, and advocacy initiatives

Final Thoughts

The homelessness crisis in Alachua County underscores systemic inequities deeply ingrained in American society. Alachua County faces challenges in addressing veteran homelessness, with an increasing number of unsheltered veterans requiring additional resources that connect them with appropriate housing and supportive services. Efforts to combat youth homelessness in Alachua County have demonstrated effectiveness over the past decade, emphasizing the importance of continued funding and expansion of support services targeted at preventing youth homelessness. To address homelessness in Alachua County, a robust public health approach is crucial. Policymakers must prioritize:

- Preventive healthcare measures
- Supportive housing services tailored towards disadvantaged groups such as African Americans and veterans
- Public health outreach initiatives

Resources

Alachua County, FL | Data USA. Retrieved April 4, 2024, from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/alachua-county-fl>

Florida | Homeless Youth. (2024). Retrieved April 2, 2024, from <https://www.homelessyouth.org/en/us/florida>

Urban Institute. (2020). Centering Racial Equity is Critical to Ending Homelessness [Research Summary]. Housing Matters. <https://housingmatters.urban.org/research-summary/centering-racial-equity-critical-ending-homelessness>