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# Persons Experiencing Homelessness in San Diego County, 2023-2025



Accredited on May 17, 2016  
Reaccredited on August 21, 2023

County of San Diego, Health and Human  
Services Agency, Public Health Services,  
Community Health Statistics Unit

Prepared August 2025



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August 2025

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This publication Persons Experiencing Homeless in San Diego County, 2023-2025 utilizes estimated data that is current up through 2025 or the most current year available at the time this publication was in development. This document was developed under the Community Health Statistics Unit of the County of San Diego and is in support of Live Well San Diego.

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# Introduction

## Homelessness in San Diego County

In 2024, the United States was home to over 338 million people, where on a single night, 771,480 people were experiencing homelessness.<sup>1,2</sup> Of the persons experiencing homelessness (PEH) in the United States in 2024, 24% were located in California, and 10,605 were located in San Diego County.<sup>3</sup> In 2024, San Diego County had the second largest number of PEH in California and the seventh largest number of PEH in the United States.<sup>2</sup> PEH face a variety of health risks, including poverty, chronic disease, overcrowding in shelters, poor mental health, and substance use disorders.<sup>4</sup> Collection and examination of data identifying PEH and their health outcomes is crucial to understanding this population's health disparities.

This brief provides key take aways from the Persons Experiencing Homelessness in San Diego County Dashboard, 2023-2025, located here: [Persons Experiencing Homelessness in San Diego County, 2023-2025 | Tableau Public](#). This includes data from the 2015-2025 Point-in-Time Count for San Diego County, homeless student data from the 2023-2024 California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System for San Diego County, the 2023 California Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) data for medical encounters among persons experiencing homelessness treated in a San Diego County facility, and the 2023 Vital Records Business Intelligence System (VRBIS) data among persons experiencing homelessness in San Diego County.

## Definitions

### Point-in-Time Count Definition<sup>2</sup>

Definitions of homelessness vary by data source. To be considered homeless in the Point-in-Time Count, a person needs to meet the definition of experiencing homelessness used by HUD<sup>2</sup>. It is defined as lacking a fixed, regular,



In 2024, there were **771,480** persons experiencing homelessness in the United States (US).



In 2024, there were **187,084** persons experiencing homelessness in California, accounting for **24%** of the US homeless population.



In 2024, there were **10,605** persons experiencing homelessness in San Diego County, accounting for **5.7%** of California's homeless population.

and adequate nighttime residence, meaning the following:

- An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; or
- An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals).

### **California Department of Education, California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) Definition<sup>5</sup>**

To be considered a homeless student in the CALPADS data, enrolled students must have reported experiencing homelessness at any point in time during the academic year. This includes students reporting residing in a hotel, motel, or a temporary shelter, living temporarily doubled-up, or were temporarily unsheltered.

### **Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) Definition<sup>6</sup>**

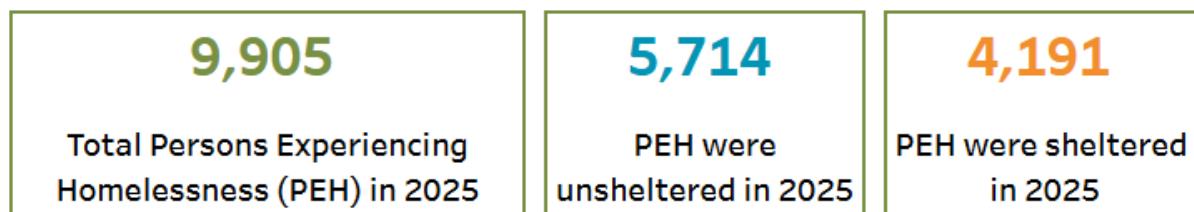
In the 2023 Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) Emergency Department Discharge Data and Hospital Discharge data, a person was considered homeless if the homelessness indicator was marked ‘Yes’, or an ICD-10 diagnosis code for reporting homelessness was included in the patient record. This includes Z59.00, Z59.01, and Z59.02.

### **Vital Records Business Intelligence System (VRBIS) Definition<sup>7</sup>**

In the data from the Vital Records and Business Intelligence System (VRBIS), a person was considered to have been experiencing homelessness if the homeless status as entered on death certificate field 25A was ‘Yes.’

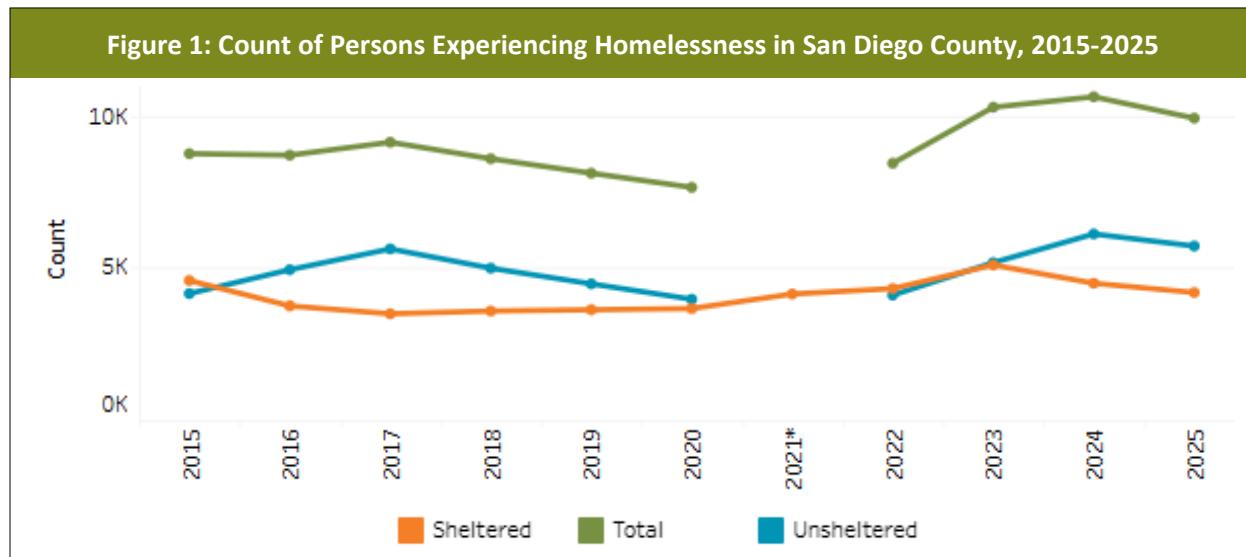
## Point-in-Time Count Data

### Persons Experiencing in Homelessness in San Diego County



In 2025, there were 9,905 persons experiencing homelessness on any given night in San Diego County. Of those, over half (57.7%) were unsheltered, and 42.3% were sheltered.

### Trends Among Persons Experiencing Homelessness



\*The Point-in-Time Count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Regional Task Force on Homelessness, Point-in-Time Count, 2015-2025.

**Overall, the number of persons experiencing homelessness (PEH) has increased from 2015 to 2025.**

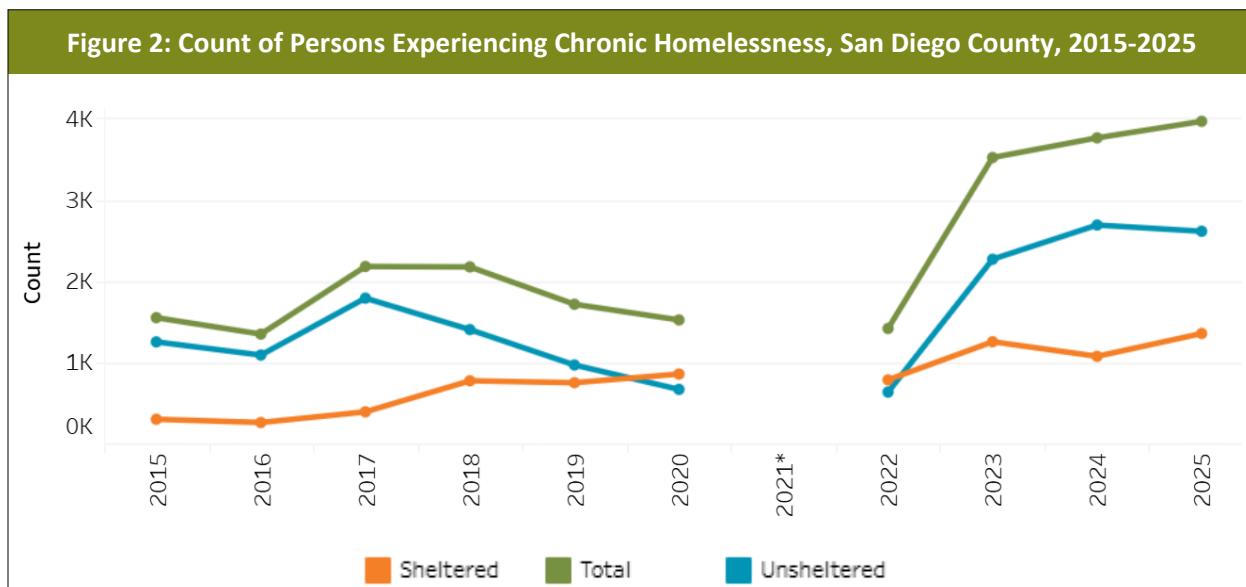
The number of PEH increased from 8,742 in 2015 to 9,905 in 2025. Similarly, the number of unsheltered PEH increased from 4,156 in 2015 to 5,714 in 2025. The number of sheltered PEH decreased from 4,586 to 4,191.

**However, 2025 saw the first decrease in total PEH from the prior year since 2020.**

From 2024 to 2025, the number of PEH decreased from 10,605 to 9,905. The number of unsheltered PEH decreased from 6,110 in 2024 to 5,714 in 2025, and the number of sheltered PEH decreased from 4,495 in 2024 to 4,191 in 2025.

## Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness

An individual is considered chronically homeless if the individual has a disability and has been continuously experiencing homelessness 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 experiencing homelessness on those occasions is at least 12 months.<sup>2</sup>



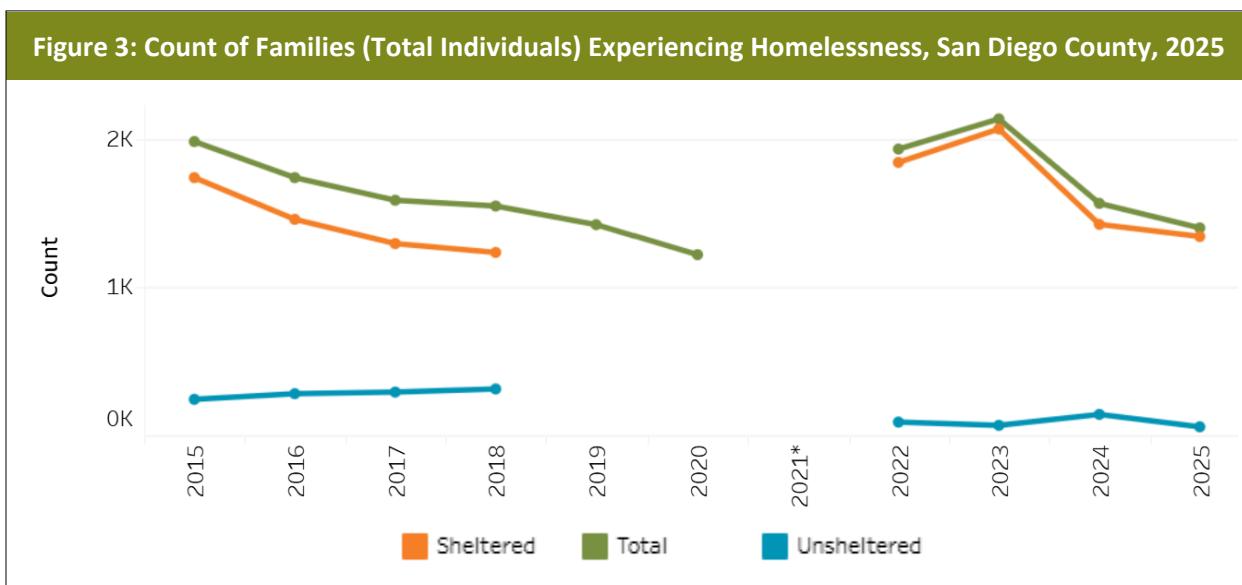
\*The Point-in-Time Count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Regional Task Force on Homelessness, Point-in-Time Count, 2015-2025.

- In 2025, the chronically homeless population accounted for 40% of the homeless population in San Diego County. Over 65% of the chronically homeless population was unsheltered.
- The number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness has increased every year from 2023-2025.
- The number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness more than doubled from 2022 (1,414) to 2023 (3,516). The majority of the increase was among unsheltered PEH.

## Families Experiencing Homelessness

A household is considered a family household experiencing homelessness if the household is made up of at least one adult aged 18 or older and one child under 18 years old that were experiencing homelessness together on the night of the point-in-time count.<sup>2</sup>



\*The Point-in-Time Count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

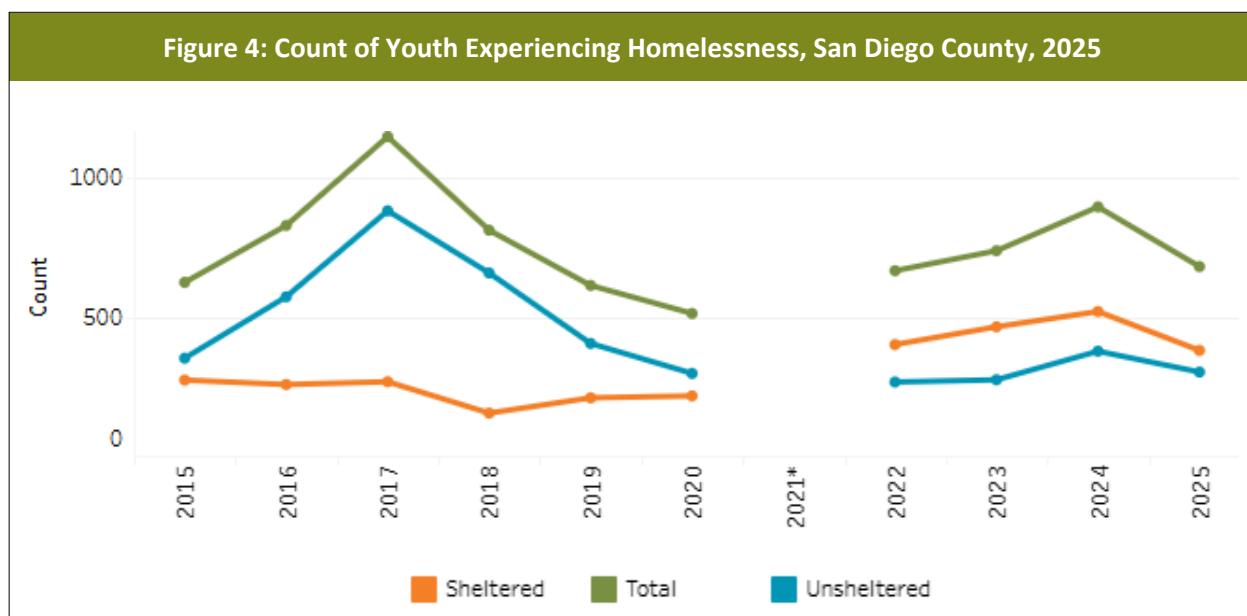
Counts of individuals in families experiencing homelessness are not available by sheltered and unsheltered status for 2019-2020.

Source: Regional Task Force on Homelessness, Point-in-Time Count, 2015-2025.

- In 2025, the number of individuals in families experiencing homelessness accounted for 14% of the total PEH population. A large majority of families experiencing homelessness were sheltered (96%).
- The total number of individuals in families experiencing homelessness has decreased from 1,981 in 2015 to 1,397 in 2025.
- The number of individuals in families that were unsheltered remained relatively stable from 2015 to 2025.

## Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Unaccompanied Youth/Children (under 18) are people in households with only children under the age of 18 who are not part of a family with children or accompanied by their parent or guardian during their experience of homelessness. Unaccompanied Youth (18-24) are young adults 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.<sup>2</sup>



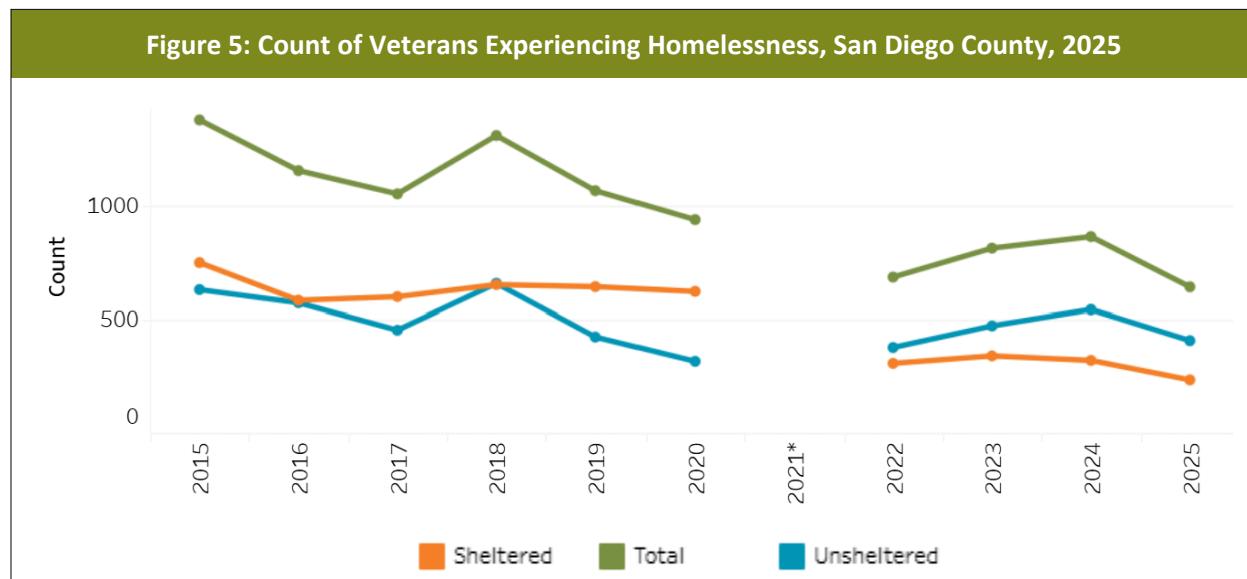
\*The Point-in-Time Count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Regional Task Force on Homelessness, Point-in-Time Count, 2015-2025.

- In 2025, unaccompanied youth accounted for 7% of the PEH population. About 44% of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness were unsheltered.
- There was an increase in the total number of youth experiencing homelessness from 2020 to 2024. However, the number decreased from 897 in 2024 to 682 in 2025.
- Since 2022, sheltered individuals have made up a larger proportion of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness than unsheltered individuals.

## Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

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.<sup>2</sup> Veterans are vulnerable to homelessness due to a variety of reasons, including military-related factors such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and military skills that may not be transferable to the civilian workforce.<sup>8</sup>

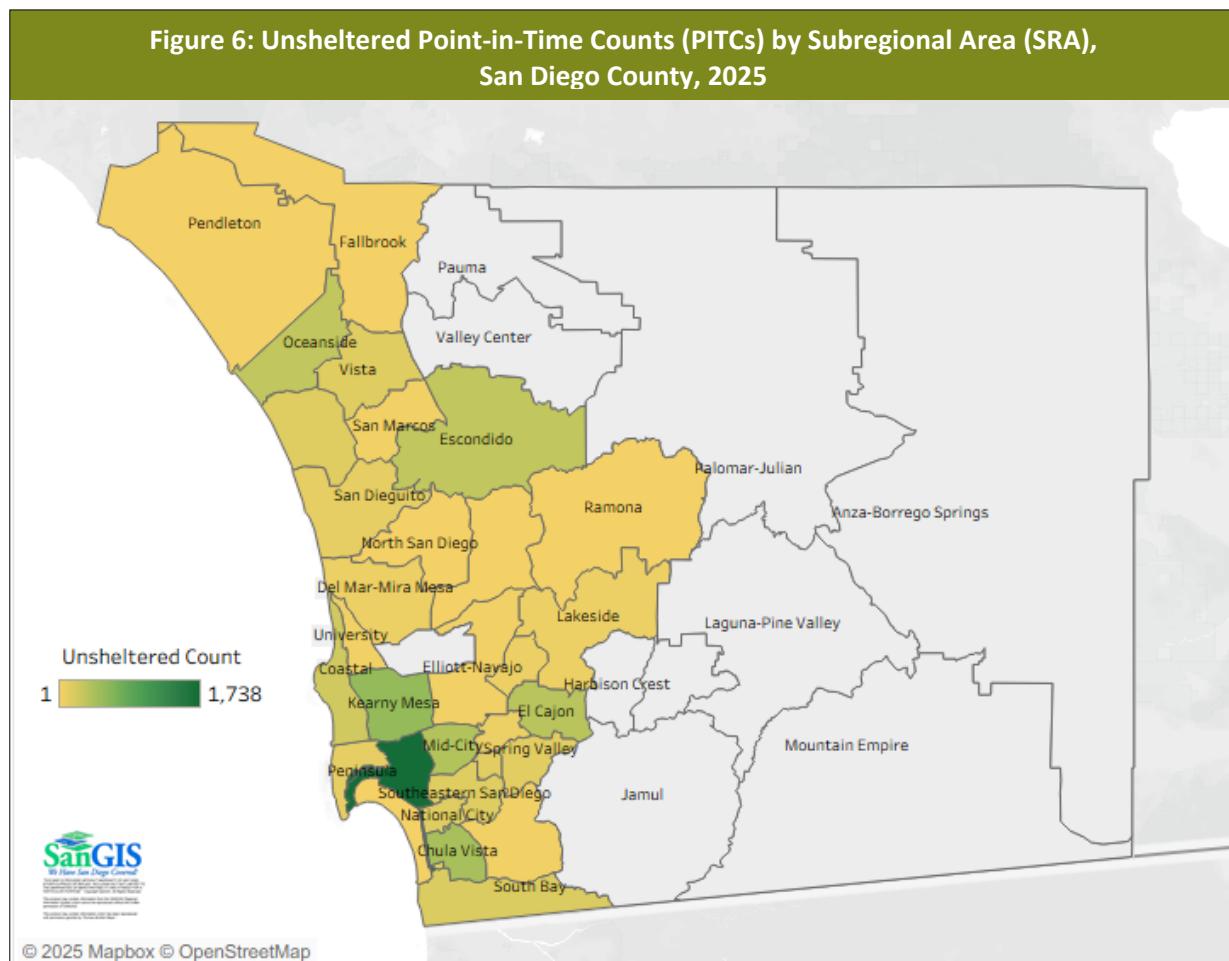


\*The Point-in-Time Count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Regional Task Force on Homelessness, Point-in-Time Count, 2015-2025.

- In 2025, veterans accounted for 6% of the PEH population. Nearly 2 in 3 veterans experiencing homelessness were unsheltered, and over 1 in 3 were sheltered.
- Overall, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness decreased from 1,381 in 2015 to 643 in 2025.
- There were a higher number of unsheltered than sheltered veterans every year from 2022 to 2025.

## Unsheltered Counts by Subregional Area (SRA)



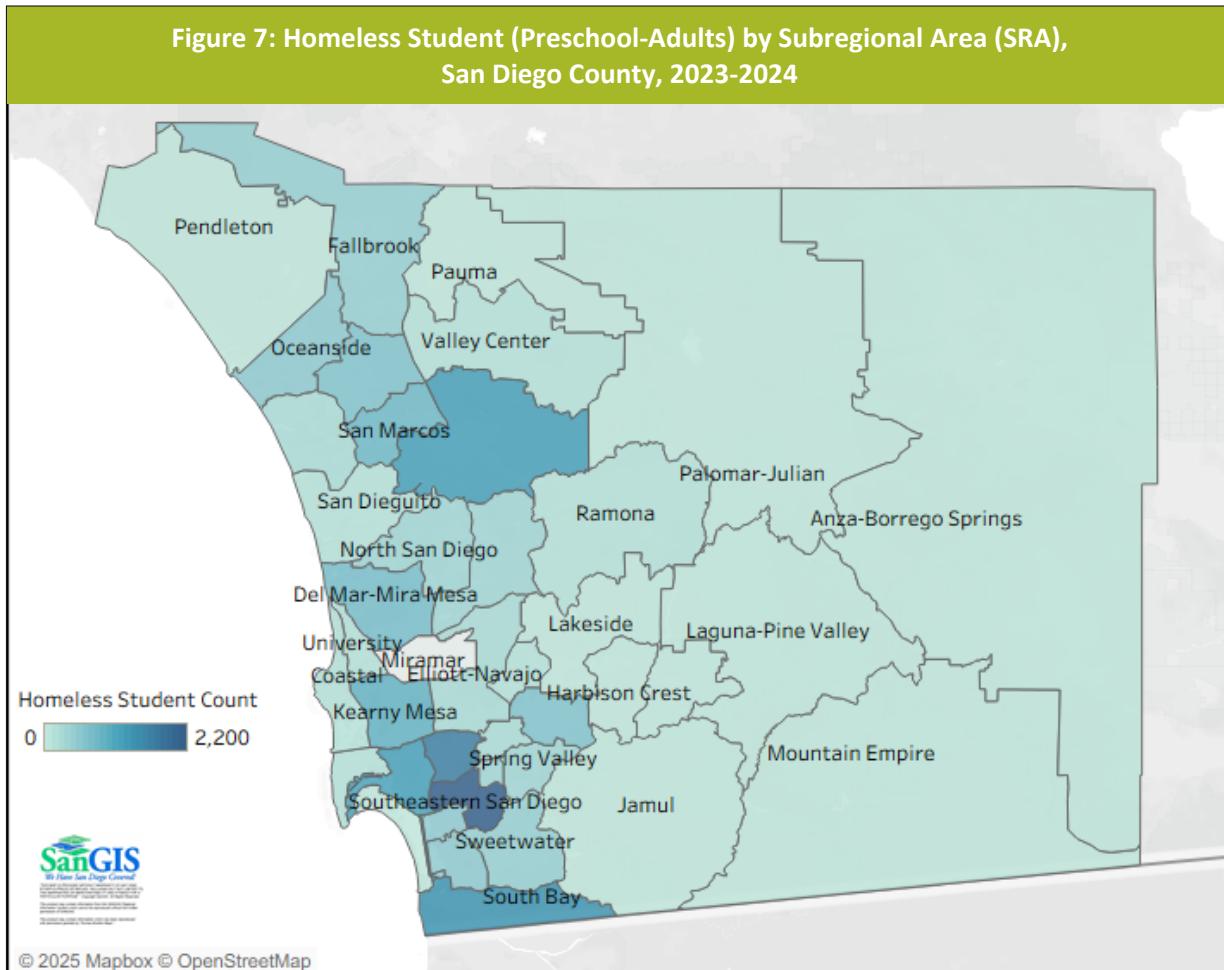
Source: Regional Task Force on Homelessness, Point-in-Time Count, 2025.

**Central San Diego Subregional Area (SRA) had the greatest number of unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness in Central Region, and San Diego County overall.**

In 2025, about 1,700 unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness were counted in Central San Diego SRA.

# Students Experiencing Homelessness

## Homeless Students in San Diego County

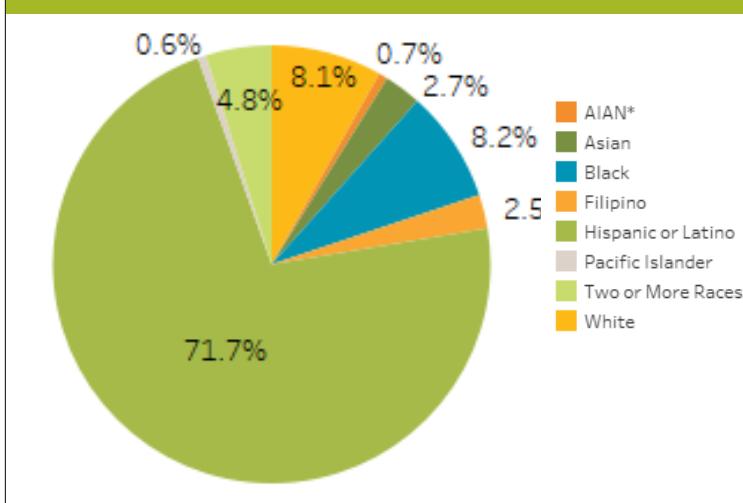


Source: California Department of Education, California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), 2023-2024.

In the 2023-2024 school year, there were 17,226 students experiencing homelessness in San Diego County.

Among Subregional Areas (SRAs) in San Diego County, Southeastern San Diego had the greatest number of students experiencing homelessness (2,200), followed by Mid-City (1,675).

**Figure 8: Homeless Student Population by Race/Ethnicity, San Diego County, 2023-2024**



Source: California Department of Education, Data Quest, 2023-24 Homeless Student Enrollment by Dwelling Type, San Diego County Report Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity. Accessed 7/16/25.

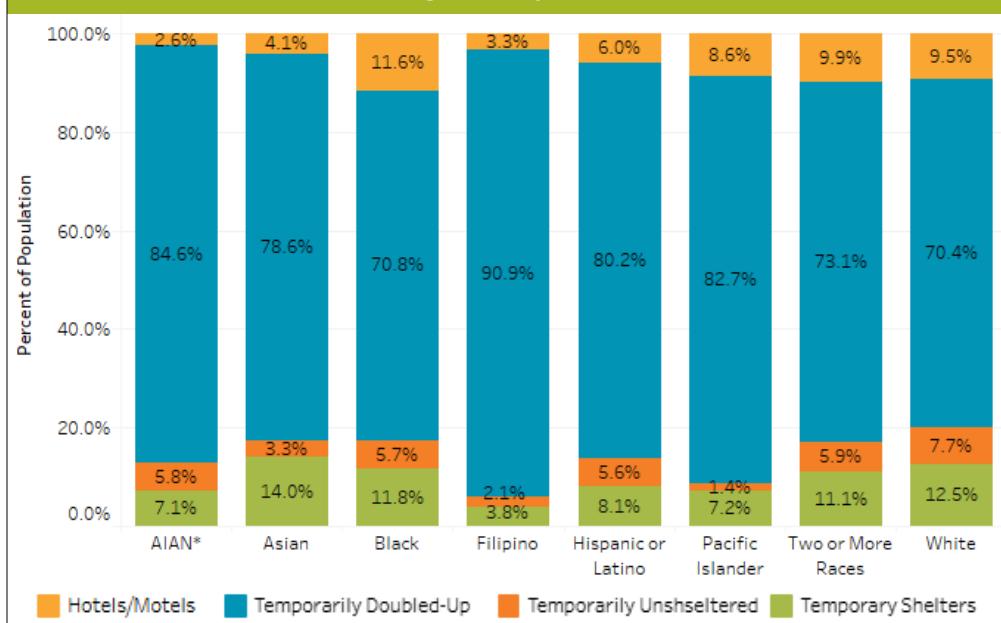
In the 2023-2024 school year, the majority of the homeless student population was Hispanic or Latino.

The Hispanic/Latino population made up nearly 72% of the homeless student population, a proportion 1.4 times the proportion of the total student enrollment in San Diego County overall (49.5%). Black students made up 8.2% of the homeless student population, nearly twice the proportion of Black students in San Diego County overall (4.3%).

In the 2023-2024 school year, the majority of the homeless student population, regardless of race/ethnicity, was temporarily doubled-up.

The Black homeless student population had the highest proportion of students living in hotels/motels (11.6%), the Asian homeless student population had the highest proportion of students living in temporary shelters (14.0%), and the White student population had the highest proportion of students who were temporarily unsheltered (7.7%).

**Figure 9: Homeless Student Count by Race/Ethnicity and Dwelling, San Diego County, 2023-2024**



Source: California Department of Education, Data Quest, 2023-24 Homeless Student Enrollment by Dwelling Type, San Diego County Report Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity. Accessed 7/16/25.

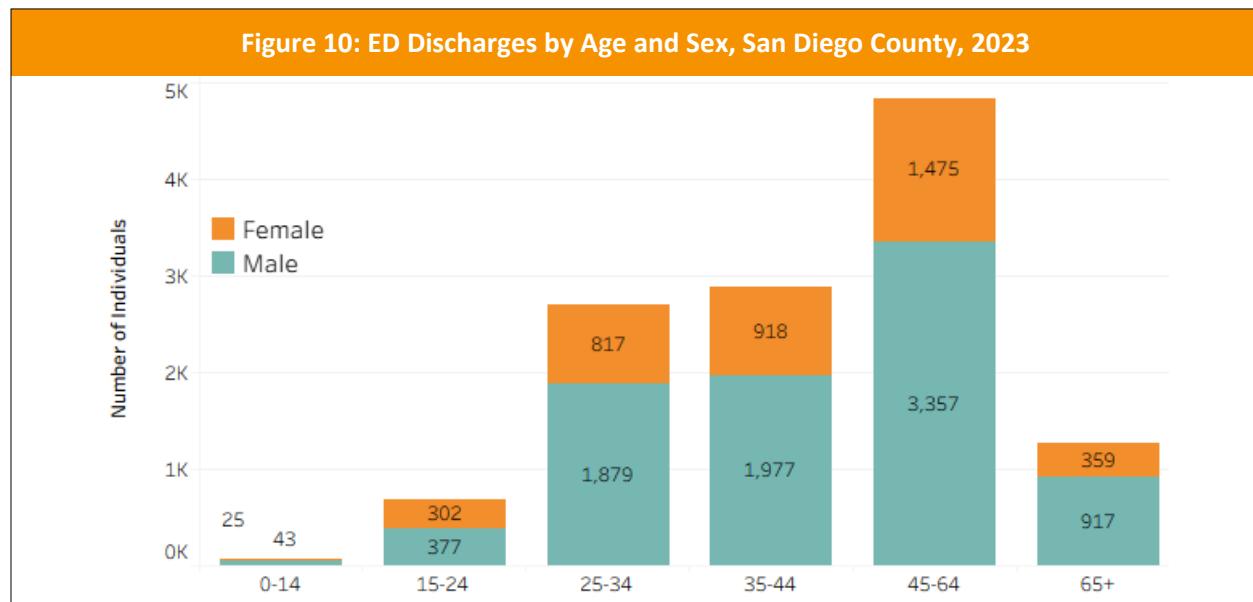
# Medical Encounters

Hospitals in San Diego County are beginning to adopt the practice of indicating select social determinants of health in patients' medical records through defined codes (ICD-10 Z codes). This information was utilized to examine hospital and emergency department (ED) discharge data for persons experiencing homelessness in 2023.

## Emergency Department Discharges

|  |   |                                     |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Number of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness Discharged from the ED | Total Number of ED Discharges Experiencing Homelessness | Average Number of Visits per Person |
| 12,453   | 36,724  | 2.9                                 |

In 2023, 12,453 persons experiencing homelessness were discharged from the Emergency Department (ED) in San Diego County. There was a total of 36,724 ED discharges in 2023, indicating an average of about 2.9 visits per person experiencing homelessness.

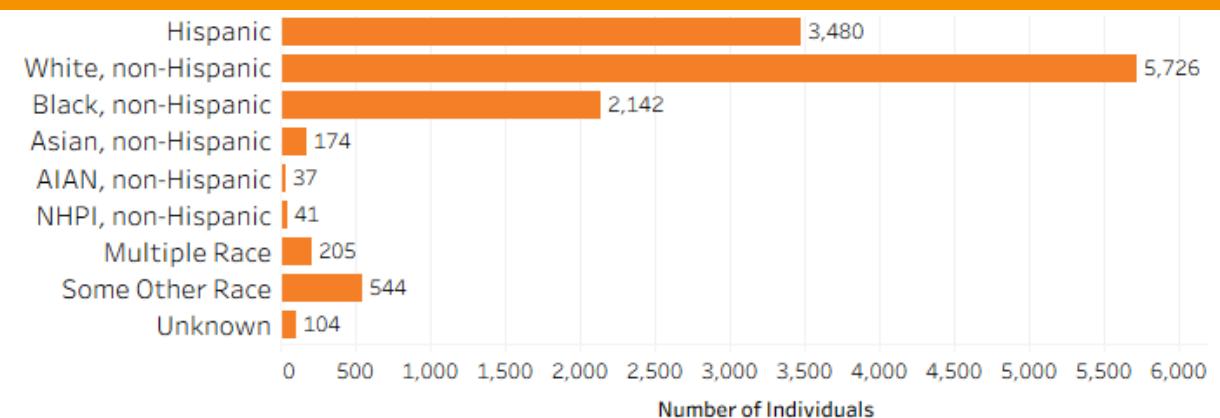


*Individuals with unknown gender or age are not included in count of gender by age.*

*Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), Emergency Department Discharge Data, 2023.*

Among PEH that were discharged from the ED, the highest number of discharges was among 45–64-year-olds for both males and females. There were more male PEH discharged from the ED than female PEH.

**Figure 11: ED Discharges by Race/Ethnicity, San Diego County, 2023**



AIAN: American Indian/Alaska Native. NHPI: Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), Emergency Department Discharge Data, 2023.

Among PEH discharged from the ED, the highest number of discharges was among non-Hispanic White PEH, followed by Hispanic, and non-Hispanic Black.

**Figure 12: Emergency Department Discharges Among PEH by Top Five Facility Zip Codes, San Diego County, 2023**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 92103 | 6,317 |
| 91942 | 1,435 |
| 92120 | 863   |
| 92123 | 648   |
| 92029 | 606   |

**Figure 13: Emergency Department Discharges Among PEH by Top Five Expected Sources of Payment, San Diego County, 2023**

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Medicaid (Medi-Cal)                                 | 9,211 |
| Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Medicare Risk | 973   |
| Medicare Part B                                     | 877   |
| Self-Pay  | 574   |
| Health Maintenance Organization                     | 243   |

Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), Emergency Department Discharge Data, 2023.

Emergency Departments in zip code 92103 had the greatest number of emergency discharges of PEH (6,317 discharges) compared to other zip codes. The majority of PEH discharged from emergency departments in San Diego County in 2023 had Medi-Cal (9,211) or Health Maintenance Organization Medicare Risk (973) as the expected source of payment.

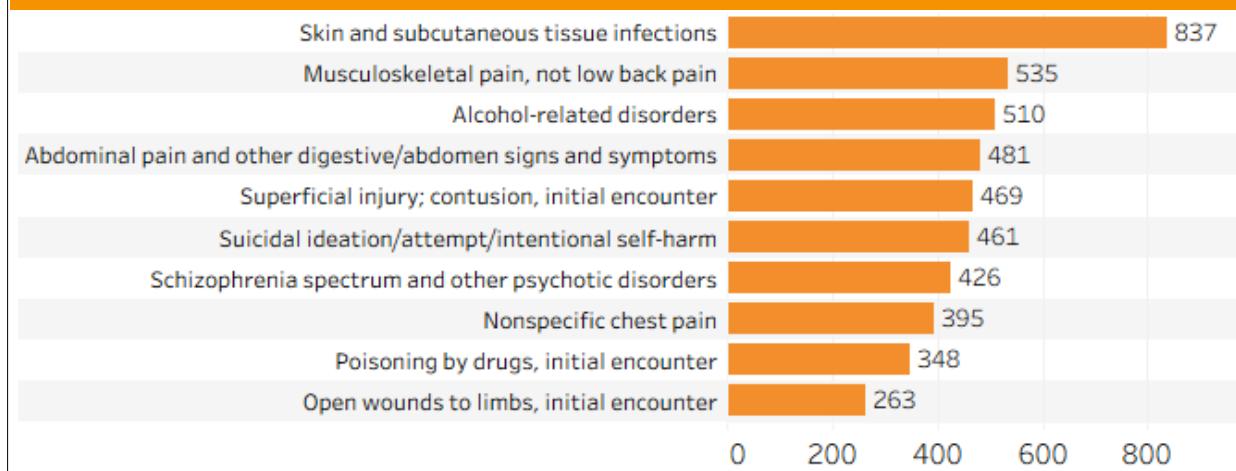
**Figure 14: Emergency Department Discharges Among PEH by Top Three Patient Dispositions, San Diego County, 2023**

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Discharged to home or self care (routine discharge)  | 10,980 |
| Left against medical advice or discontinued care   | 601    |
| Discharged/Transferred to a psychiatric hospital or psychiatric distinct part unit of a hospital | 271    |

The majority of PEH discharged from the emergency departments in San Diego County in 2023 were discharged to home or self-care (routine discharge) (10,980 discharges) or left against medical advice or discontinued care (601 discharges).

Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), Emergency Department Discharge Data, 2023.

**Figure 15: Top 10 Primary Diagnoses Among PEH Discharged from Emergency Departments, San Diego County, 2023**



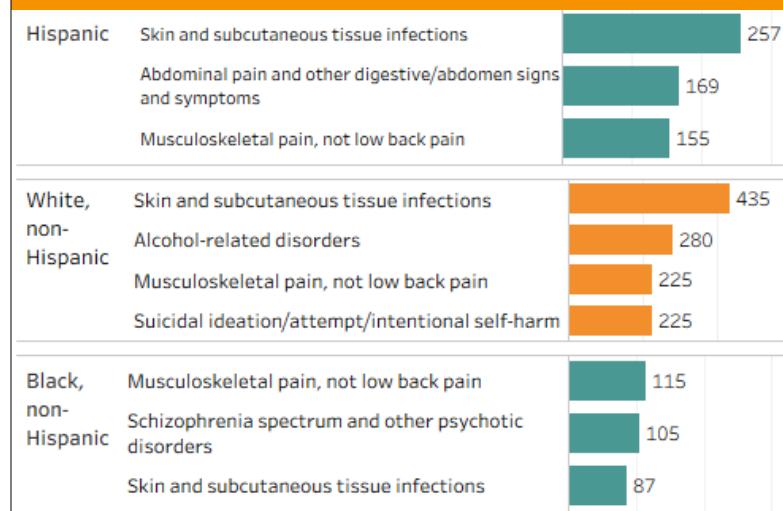
Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAL), Emergency Department Discharge Data, 2023.

The top diagnosis among PEH discharged from emergency departments in San Diego County was skin and subcutaneous tissue infections (837 discharges), followed by musculoskeletal pain, not low back pain (535 discharges), and alcohol-related disorders (510 discharges).

The top diagnosis among Hispanic PEH discharged from emergency departments in San Diego County was skin and subcutaneous tissue infections (257 discharges), followed by abdominal pain and other digestive/abdomen signs and symptoms (169 discharges), and musculoskeletal pain, not low back pain (155 discharges).

The top diagnosis among non-Hispanic White PEH discharged from emergency departments in San Diego County was skin and subcutaneous tissue infections (435 discharges), followed by alcohol-related disorders (280 discharges), musculoskeletal pain, not low back pain (225 discharges), and suicidal ideation/attempts/intentional self-harm (225 discharges).

**Figure 16: Top 3 Primary Diagnoses Among PEH Discharged from Emergency Departments by Race/Ethnicity, San Diego County, 2023**



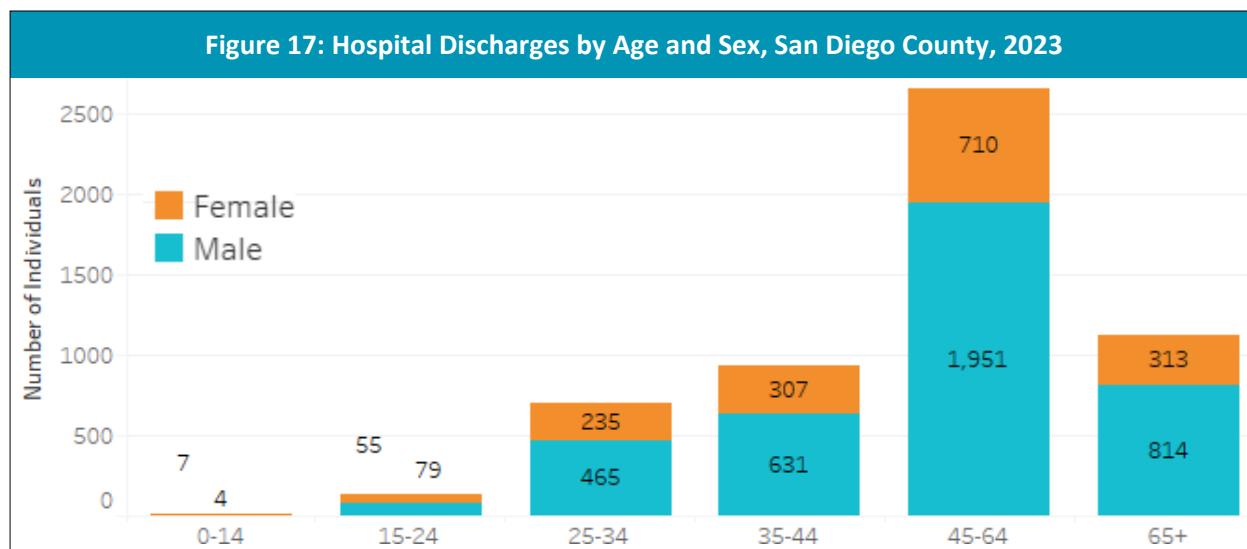
Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAL), Emergency Department Discharge Data, 2023.

The top diagnosis among non-Hispanic Black PEH discharged from emergency departments in San Diego County was musculoskeletal pain, not low back pain (115 discharges), followed by schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders (105 discharges), skin and subcutaneous tissue infections (87 discharges).

## Hospital Discharges

|  |   |                                     |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Number of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness Discharged from the Hospital | Total Number of Hospital Discharges Experiencing Homelessness | Average Number of Visits per Person |
| 5,572  | 10,175  | 1.8                                 |

In 2023, 5,572 persons experiencing homelessness were discharged from a hospital in San Diego County. There was a total of 10,175 hospital discharges in 2023, indicating an average of 1.8 visits per person experiencing homelessness.

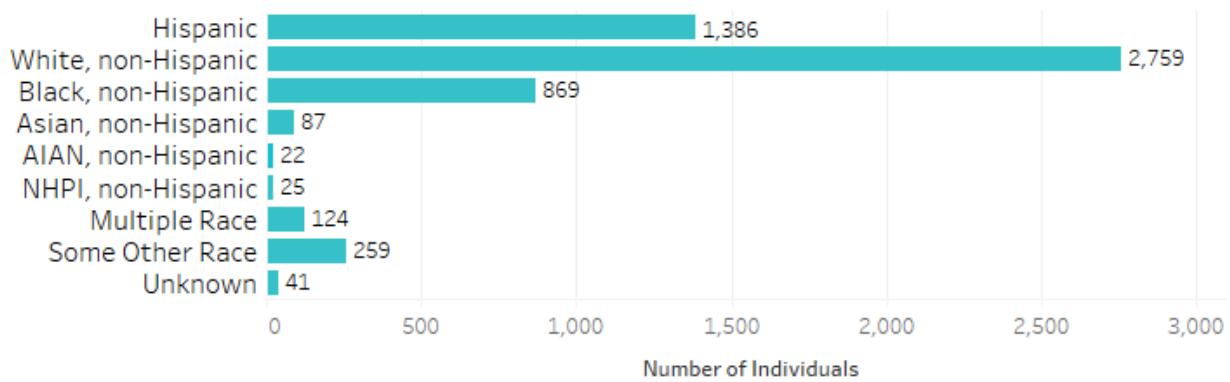


*Individuals with unknown gender or age are not included in count of gender by age.*

Source: California Department of Healthcare Access and Information (HCAI), Patient Discharge Data, 2023.

Among PEH discharged from the hospital, the highest number of discharges was among 45–64-year-olds for both males and females. There were more male PEH discharged from the hospital than female PEH.

**Figure 18: Hospital Discharges by Race/Ethnicity, San Diego County, 2023**



AIAN: American Indian/Alaska Native. NHPI: Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Source: California Department of Healthcare Access and Information (HCAI), Patient Discharge Data, 2023.

Among PEH that were discharged from the hospital, the highest number of discharges was among non-Hispanic White PEH, followed by Hispanic, and non-Hispanic Black.

**Figure 19: Hospital Discharges Among PEH by Top Five Facility Zip Codes, San Diego County, 2023**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 92103 | 2,556 |
| 91942 | 706   |
| 92123 | 462   |
| 92120 | 324   |
| 91911 | 283   |

**Figure 20: Hospital Discharges Among PEH by Top Five Expected Sources of Payment, San Diego County, 2023**

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Medicaid (Medi-Cal) | 3,840 |
| Medicare            | 1,385 |
| Private Coverage    | 169   |
| Other Government    | 86    |
| Self-Pay            | 63    |

Source: California Department of Healthcare Access and Information (HCAI), Patient Discharge Data, 2023.

Hospitals in the zip code 92103 had the greatest number of discharges of PEH (2,556 discharges) compared to other zip codes. The majority of PEH discharged from hospitals in San Diego County in 2023 had Medi-Cal (3,840 discharges) or Medicare (1,385) as the expected source of payment.

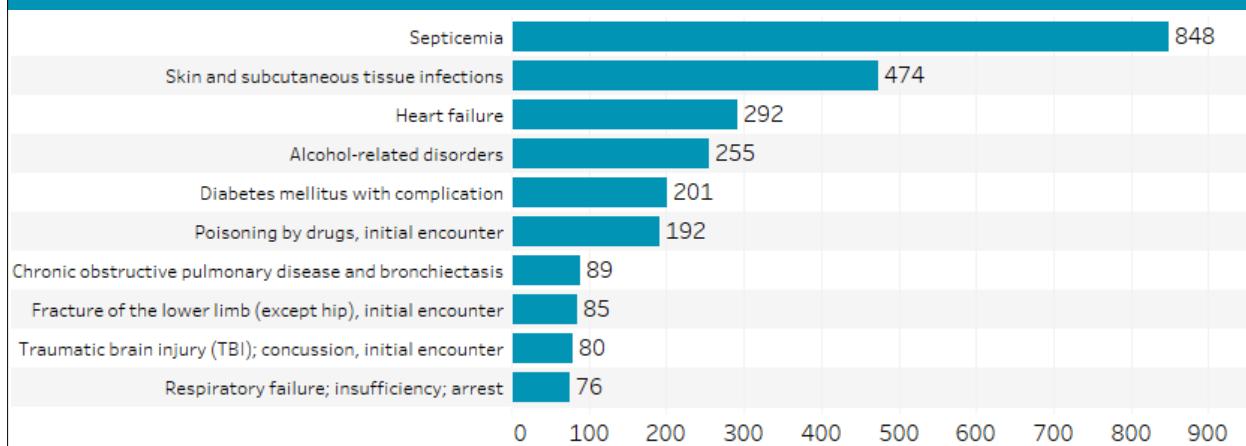
The majority of PEH discharged from the hospitals in San Diego County in 2023 were discharged to home or self-care (routine discharge) (3,376 discharges) or were discharged/transferred to a skilled nursing facility (SNF) with Medicare certification in anticipation of skilled care (979 discharges).

**Figure 21: Hospital Discharges Among PEH by Top Three Patient Dispositions, San Diego County, 2023**

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Discharged to home or self care (routine discharge)  | 3,376 |
| Discharged/transferred to skilled nursing facility (SNF) with Medicare certification in anticipation of skilled care | 979   |
| Left against medical advice or discontinued care   | 548   |

Source: California Department of Healthcare Access and Information (HCAI), Patient Discharge Data, 2023.

**Figure 22: Top 10 Primary Diagnoses Among PEH Discharged from Hospitals, San Diego County, 2023**



Source: California Department of Healthcare Access and Information (HCAI), Patient Discharge Data, 2023.

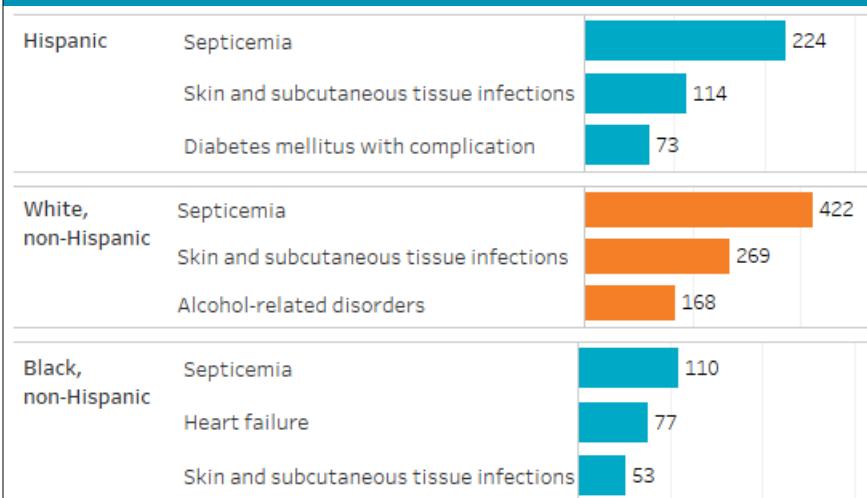
The top diagnosis among PEH discharged from hospitals in San Diego County was septicemia (848 discharges), followed by skin and subcutaneous tissue infections (474 discharges), and heart failure (292 discharges).

The top diagnosis among Hispanic PEH discharged from hospitals in San Diego County was septicemia (224 discharges), followed by skin and subcutaneous tissue infections (114 discharges), and diabetes mellitus with complication (73 discharges).

The top diagnosis among non-Hispanic White PEH discharged from hospitals in San Diego County was septicemia (422 discharges), followed by skin and subcutaneous tissue infections (269 discharges), and alcohol-related

disorders (168 discharges). The top diagnoses among non-Hispanic Black PEH discharged from hospitals in San Diego County was septicemia (110 discharges), followed by heart failure (77 discharges) and skin and subcutaneous tissue infections (53 discharges).

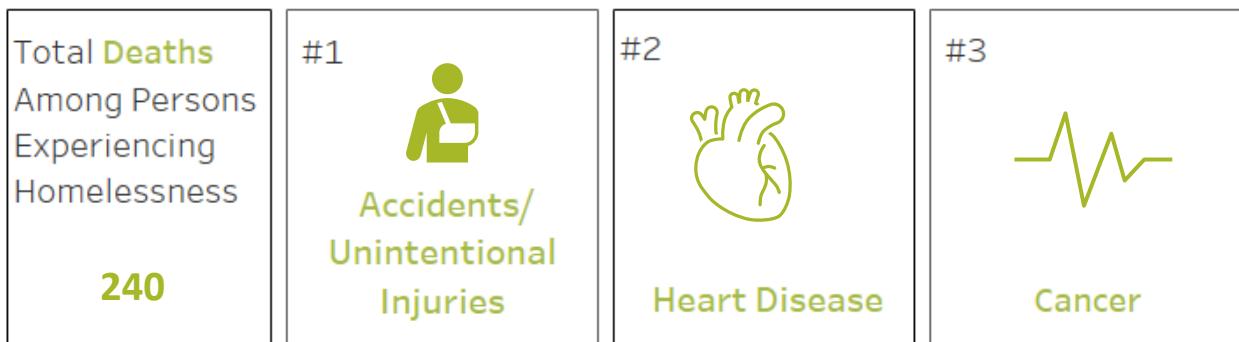
**Figure 23: Top 3 Primary Diagnoses Among PEH Discharged from Hospitals by Race/Ethnicity, San Diego County, 2023**



Source: California Department of Healthcare Access and Information (HCAI), Patient Discharge Data, 2023.

# Mortality

## Leading Causes of Death Among Persons Experiencing Homelessness in San Diego County, 2023



Rank is based on total number of deaths in each of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) "rankable" categories. The top 3 leading causes of death presented here are based on deaths that occurred in San Diego for their respective years. Cause of death is based on the underlying cause of death reported on death certificates as classified by ICD-10 codes. Source: California Department of Public Health, Center for Health Statistics, Office of Health Information and Research, Vital Records Business Intelligence System.

The top three leading causes of death among persons experiencing homelessness in San Diego County in 2023 were accidents/unintentional injuries, heart disease, and cancer. The unsheltered population made up 83.8% of the deaths in 2023 among PEH.

**Figure 24: Deaths Among Persons Experiencing Homelessness in San Diego County, 2023**

| Demographic    | Count      | % of Total    |
|----------------|------------|---------------|
| Sex            |            |               |
| Male           | 189        | 78.8%         |
| Female         | 50         | 20.8%         |
| Age            |            |               |
| Ages 0-9       | §          | §             |
| Ages 10-19     | §          | §             |
| Ages 20-29     | 12         | 5.0%          |
| Ages 30-39     | 42         | 17.5%         |
| Ages 40-49     | 48         | 20.0%         |
| Ages 50-59     | 50         | 20.8%         |
| Ages 60-69     | 64         | 26.7%         |
| Ages 70-79     | 19         | 7.9%          |
| Ages 80 Plus   | §          | §             |
| Race/Ethnicity |            |               |
| Hispanic       | 51         | 21.3%         |
| NH White       | 150        | 62.5%         |
| NH Black       | 28         | 11.7%         |
| NH API         | §          | §             |
| NH Other       | §          | §             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>240</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

### Sex

Males made up the majority of the deaths among PEH (78.8%).

### Age

Nearly half of the deaths among PEH were among those aged 50-69 (47.5%).

### Race/Ethnicity

The Non-Hispanic White population accounted for 62.5% of deaths among PEH, followed by Hispanic (21.3%), and Non-Hispanic Black (11.7%).

Table contains deaths that occurred in San Diego County. § Not shown for fewer than 11 deaths. NH: Non-Hispanic. Source: California Department of Public Health, Centers for Health Statistics, Office of Health Information and Research, Vital Records Business Intelligence System, 2023.

## Conclusion

Homelessness continues to increase across the United States, California, and San Diego County. Lack of adequate and stable housing exacerbates existing health problems and can cause new ones, including chronic disease, poor mental health, and increased complications following infection or injury. Collection and examination of data identifying persons experiencing homelessness and their health outcomes is crucial to understanding the population's health disparities. These data may inform decisions regarding targeted resources and interventions.

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