

Student Homelessness in Silicon Valley

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According to data from the California Department of Education, in the 2021-22 school year, 1.81% of K-12 students living in Santa Clara County, California were reported as homeless compared to just 1.34% the year prior. With a student's situation at home being a large factor in their academic success, this news is concerning for the county.

The alarming increase in the homelessness rate of K-12 students in Santa Clara County could be caused by a variety of factors such as increasing house prices. Santa Clara County now ranks third in the U.S. in terms of highest median home price at a staggering \$1.46 million. Although COVID-19 made its way to California during the 2019-2020 school year, the effects of the epidemic may also be causing this increase in student homelessness. The pandemic kept people indoors, and decreased demand for small institutions such as family-owned restaurants and stores. Many people lost their source of income during this time and were relying on government issued funds, which the government stopped issuing at the end of 2021. This may have contributed to the visible increase in student homelessness between the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.

COVID-19 was not the only reason people lost jobs, however. Over the last two years, corporations such as Twitter, Meta and Amazon have had waves of layoffs, leaving many workers jobless. Since Santa Clara County is in the heart of Silicon Vally, the large number of layoffs by the surrounding tech companies may also be a factor leading to the increase in student homelessness. With less people employed in this area, it makes sense that some families are no longer able to afford housing.

With several factors that may all have an impact on the financial situation of families with K-12 children, it is unclear what exactly is causing the sharp increase in student homelessness rate in Santa Clara County. However, with 1.81% of students now experiencing homelessness, this is clearly an issue the county must resolve.