



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

**PART 2:** Estimates of Homelessness in the United States

**JULY 2022**

# The 2019-2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress





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For the first time in two decades, in an effort to meaningfully include persons with lived experiences and expertise (PLEE) as a part of the AHAR process, HUD invited TA providers with lived experiences to provide a limited review of the AHAR chapters. The process was, unfortunately, limited due to the structure/process exclusion, i.e., the lack of early involvement of PLEE and timing of the request and was focused on chapters 1 through 9 at the exclusion of the introductory material including About this Report, Broader Perspectives on Housing Instability, Key Findings, and Key Terms. This was, however, still a major first step in addressing long standing concerns about the lack of intentional involvement of persons accessing or who have accessed the homeless response system in the AHAR process. We are tremendously grateful for HUD's investment to involve us—as persons with lived experiences and lived expertise—as a part of these conversations and encourage HUD, Congress, and other federal partners to continue to prioritize equity and expand to be more mindfully and intentionally inclusive at all levels of involvement. Given the systemic and structural causes of homelessness, the only way to end homelessness is to include the voices and power of people who have experiences of homelessness as decision makers, beginning from the early planning stages onward, to lead the change across systems.

## Message from the Secretary



I am pleased to submit the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 2019/2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) Part 2. This is the second of a two-part report that provides estimates of the scale of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in the U.S. The 2019 and 2020 Part 1 reports, which were published in January 2020 and January 2021, provide one-night estimates of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness at the state, local, and national levels.

This report provides a national estimate of people who utilized shelter programs at some point during the year in both 2019 and 2020. The 2019 data were previously delayed due to the pandemic and are now included in this report alongside the data for 2020.

The COVID-19 public health emergency had a tremendous impact on our nation's shelter programs, which our data reflects. In 2020, many shelters closed or reduced their capacity due to the emergency. Those in need of shelter may have also avoided seeking out and staying in facilities out of concern for their health and safety. These factors likely contribute to 2020 estimates being lower than estimates from 2019.

The data in this report show that fewer people entered shelter programs during the pandemic, either coming into the shelter system for the first time or returning to the system after an exit. However, more people remained in shelters, which suggests they had difficulty finding housing during the pandemic. What's more, the people who utilized shelter programs in 2020 had more acute needs—compared to 2019. There were higher rates of people with disabilities and survivors of domestic violence using shelter that year.

All told, throughout 2020, 1,253,000 people occupied emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens. The vast majority, 824,500 people, were households with only adults present. Some 417,000, around 35-percent of those counted, included families with children. And people experiencing sheltered homelessness are disproportionately black and

indigenous. This pattern has been observed in previous AHAR reports, and it holds true regardless of whether people are in families, adults on their own, veterans, unaccompanied youth, or people with chronic patterns of homelessness.

For the first time, HUD can also provide year-long estimates for unaccompanied youth and people with chronic patterns of homelessness. In 2020, approximately 93,000 unaccompanied youth used a shelter program and 185,000 people who used shelter programs had chronic patterns of homelessness. This information is critical to helping HUD and communities better understand homelessness, create strategies to prevent it, and ultimately, to end it.

We know that homelessness is most often a systemic failure resulting from deep poverty, a lack of affordable housing options, and structural racism that exists across our systems. At HUD, we are committed to advancing equity and racial justice, which includes ending and preventing homelessness.

A handwritten signature of Marcia L. Fudge in blue ink. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marcia L. Fudge

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



# About This Report

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## About This Report

In 2001, the U.S. Congress directed HUD to fund communities to implement information systems on homelessness, with the understanding that ending homelessness requires knowing the size of the problem and the way in which it affects different population groups. Three main HUD efforts have supported the development of these systems. The first provides technical assistance to communities on conducting the Point-in-Time (PIT) counts. The second establishes a set of standardized data that communities collect about people who use emergency shelters and other components of the community's homeless services system, as well as system parameters for how the information is stored and secured locally in Homelessness Management Information Systems (HMIS). The third effort establishes standards and procedures for how HMIS and PIT count data are aggregated and reported to HUD.

In February 2007, HUD released estimates of homelessness in the U.S. based on one-night PIT counts and one-year HMIS data in the first Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). AHARs have been submitted to the U.S. Congress every year since then (except for 2019 due to capacity constraints on communities from COVID-19 response but the data was collected and included in this 2020 AHAR Part 2). The AHAR documents how many people use shelter programs and how many people are experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations. The AHAR is used to inform federal, state, and local policies to prevent and end homelessness.

This report is the second part of a two-part series. The Part 1 reports show both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness from the January PIT counts. Part 1 for 2020 was published in January 2021 and provides the most recent estimates of unsheltered homelessness (*2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness*). Part 1 for 2021 was published in 2022. Because of disruption of counts of unsheltered homelessness by the public health emergency, the 2021 report focuses just on the sheltered population on a single night in January 2021.

This report, Part 2 of the AHAR for 2019 and 2020, builds on the Part 1 reports by presenting estimates of people experiencing sheltered homelessness at any point over the course of one year, based on data from HMIS. In this combined 2019-2020 Part 2 report, estimates are reported for the 2019 reporting year (October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019) and the 2020 reporting year (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020). The HMIS estimates provide information on demographics and patterns of shelter use of people who use the nation's emergency shelters, safe havens, and transitional housing programs. The report also provides demographic information about people who left homelessness for permanent supportive housing (PSH)

and who used rapid re-housing (RRH) rent subsidies during these same one-year periods.

This report is intended for several audiences: Members of Congress, staff at local service providers and Continuums of Care (CoCs), researchers, policymakers, and advocates. These audiences can use this report to understand the scope of the problem and the context for the nation's efforts to prevent and end homelessness. Stakeholders can also identify which household types and subpopulations require more attention in this effort. This report provides information on many other questions that may be of interest across all audiences:

1. How many people experience homelessness in the U.S. in any given year?
2. How many people experience homelessness in households with only adults, and how many are in families with children?
3. How many children and youth experience homelessness in the U.S.?
4. What are the age and gender characteristics of homelessness, and how do they vary by household?
5. What is the race and ethnicity of people who experience homelessness in the U.S.?
6. What is the rate of disability among people who experience homelessness?
7. How many U.S. veterans experience homelessness?
8. How many people in the U.S. have chronic patterns of homelessness?
9. How many people use rapid re-housing, and what are their characteristics?
10. How many people live in permanent supportive housing, and what are their characteristics?
11. What are the system use patterns of people experiencing homelessness?

### Shift to the Longitudinal Systems Analysis

Since the first AHAR, CoCs have submitted aggregated data to HUD from their local HMIS. Beginning with the 2018 reporting year, HUD implemented a new platform to collect a richer, more granular set of aggregated HMIS data. This platform, called the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), collects information on people and households served by the local homeless services system over the course of one year.

The nature of the HMIS data used in the AHAR did not change with the shift to LSA. Information on people's characteristics and patterns of homelessness collected as part of CoCs' HMIS records is, for the most part, self-reported. This information



may be collected using a standard survey or intake form. Some HMIS data may reflect additional supporting documentation if the information is necessary to establish eligibility for services.

However, the information presented in this AHAR is fundamentally different from the AHARs produced prior to the 2018 reporting year because of some key changes in the reporting platform and the methodology used to create estimates. Exhibit A-1 summarizes some of the changes that are important for understanding the estimates presented in this report.

During the first year of the LSA data collection, the data review and validation process revealed considerable issues with data quality, as is expected during any new data collection process. Because of the challenges with data quality in 2018, the 2018 AHAR Part 2 did not provide detail on all elements collected in the LSA.

The data collected through the LSA platform for 2019 were much improved, and the 2019 LSA data will serve as the new baseline for comparing year-to-year changes in sheltered homelessness.

**Sample for this Report**

In theory, the LSA-based AHAR is based on all CoCs rather than on a sample. However, many CoCs still had unresolved data quality issues, so this report for 2019 and 2020 continues to rely on a sample of CoCs with usable data. In addition, as has been the case since the start of the HMIS, not all providers of shelter participate in their local HMIS.<sup>1</sup> The LSA sample for data on sheltered homelessness consists of 7,937 participating shelter projects in 175 CoCs for 2019 and 7,455 participating shelter projects in 179 CoCs for 2020. The sample for data on RRH consists of 2,131 participating RRH projects in 209 CoCs for 2019 and 1,873 participating RRH projects in 190 CoCs for 2020. The sample for data on PSH consists of 2,782 participating PSH projects in 175 CoCs for 2019 and 2,812 participating PSH projects in 179 CoCs for 2020.

The national estimates in this report are weighted to extrapolate from this sample of participating projects and CoCs to the nation as a whole. The sample of participating CoCs and projects was not selected randomly, but the data were weighted to improve the sample’s representativeness of the full population. For detailed information about the methodology used to produce the estimates, see the 2019-2020 AHAR Methodology Report.

<sup>1</sup> This was the case for the sample of communities used for past AHAR reports as well.

**EXHIBIT A.1: Understanding the Changes from AHAR to LSA**

| Topic                  | Former AHAR Approach  | New LSA Approach   |
|------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Project Types</b>   | AHAR data covered three project types: emergency shelter (ES), transitional housing (TH), and permanent supportive housing (PSH). Each project type was reported on separately. | The LSA is expanded to cover five project types: ES, safe havens (SH), TH, rapid re-housing (RRH), and PSH. ES, SH, and TH data are reported together as a single sheltered homelessness category. RRH and PSH data each are reported separately.  |
| <b>Household Types</b> | AHAR data reported on two household types for each reporting category: IND (individuals) and FAM (families).  | The LSA aligns with other HUD reporting and uses the following three household types: AO (households of adults only), AC (households with at least one adult and one child), and CO (households of children only).   |
| <b>System Use</b>      | AHAR data provided limited information on household system use across time, focusing on lengths of stay in ES and TH.   | The LSA includes significant additional detail about households’ system use and includes estimates of first-time homelessness, exits to permanent housing, and returns to homelessness.  |
| <b>Demographics</b>    | AHAR demographic data were generally based on all people in a household, and most demographic information was based on counts of people rather than of households.              | The LSA has a greater focus on households rather than people. Demographic data generally is reported based on the head of household. In some cases, all adults in the household are counted, and in some cases (for example, age distributions) all people in the household are counted. |
| <b>Geography</b>       | AHAR geographic data used the Census Bureau’s “principal city” designation of sample sites and collapsed the rest of the data into a suburban/rural designation.                | The LSA has a project-level geographic designation of urban, rural, and suburban to allow for a better understanding of the geographic distribution of homelessness within and across CoCs.  |

### Comparisons to Prior Year AHAR Estimates

The 2019 and 2020 estimates are not directly comparable to estimates from prior years. The 2018 estimates served as a pilot year for LSA data and should not be used for direct comparisons of changes in homelessness over time. The prohibition here stems from concerns with data quality, as well as some changes between 2018 and 2019 to decision rules on the reporting period and people considered to be using a program based on whether or not they were already in shelter or housing or were waiting for a placement.

The 2019 and 2020 estimates also should not be compared with estimates from 2017 and prior years because of the fundamentally different nature of the sample used for reporting to the LSA compared with the sample used for AHAR reports between 2007 and 2017.

### The Public Health Emergency that Began in March 2020

The estimates for 2020 in this report are profoundly affected by the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2020 in the United States, half-way through the reporting year, October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020. Emergency shelters underwent de-concentration efforts to allow for social distancing, with many reducing capacity by 50 percent. Estimates of the number of people experiencing sheltered homelessness during the 2020 reporting year should be viewed with caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times. However, this report does provide some insight into how the public health emergency and public policy responses affected patterns of use of shelters and other programs.

### Additional Data Sources

This report uses two other data sources: Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) data. The HIC data provide an inventory of beds dedicated to serving people who are (or were) experiencing homelessness<sup>2</sup> and thus describe the nation's capacity to house such people. The HIC data are compiled by CoCs and represent the inventory of beds in various programs within the homeless services system that are available during a particular year, including programs from all funding sources. These data were used in developing the weights to extrapolate from the LSA sample of participating homeless projects to all projects in the nation.

This report uses ACS data to provide a profile of the total U.S. population and U.S. households living in poverty. The AHAR uses ACS data on gender, age, ethnicity, race, household size, disability status, and type of geographic location to serve as a

<sup>2</sup> People served in permanent housing programs are no longer considered homeless.

comparison to the national estimates of people experiencing homelessness from the LSA. The ACS data come in several forms. This report uses the 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) that corresponds most closely to the LSA data for any given year.

In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), this 2019-2020 report includes data on veterans using the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program's rapid re-housing services. This year's report also includes two additional years of data on the veterans who use the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program (HUD-VASH).<sup>3</sup> The 2019-2020 AHAR supplements the HMIS data on veterans in permanent supportive housing with administrative data on HUD-VASH from the VA's Homeless Operations Management Evaluation System (HOMES).

### How to Use this Report

The body of this report is divided into nine main chapters:

1. Sheltered People in All Household Types
2. Sheltered People in Adult-only Households
3. Sheltered People in Families with Children
4. Sheltered People in Unaccompanied Youth Households
5. Sheltered Veterans
6. People in Adult-only Households with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness
7. People Using Rapid Re-Housing Programs
8. People Living in Permanent Supportive Housing
9. Engagement in the Homeless Service System by Sheltered Households

Chapters 1-6 present LSA data on people who were experiencing sheltered homelessness at some time during the reporting year. These one-year estimates include information on gender, age, ethnicity, race, household size, disability status, chronic homelessness status, veteran status, and domestic violence survivor status. Chapters 7 and 8 are based on LSA data on formerly homeless people who are in housing supported by RRH rent subsidies or living in PSH. At the end of the report is an examination of use of the homeless services system by people experiencing homelessness based on data collected through the new LSA platform.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the HUD-VASH program see: [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/vash](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash) and <http://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp>.

## Interpretation and Key Findings

Each year, HUD reports to Congress on the number of people who experience homelessness in the United States. Preventing and ending homelessness requires accurate information on the size and nature of the homelessness in the country, both at a point-in-time and on an annual basis. This report provides information on the one-year estimates of people who were able to access shelter programs in both 2019 and 2020. Following the implementation of a new platform for collecting data from communities, 2019 has now become the baseline year for tracking changes in the numbers and characteristics of people who use shelter programs at some time during a year. The data in the Annual Homeless Assessment Reports are critical to measuring progress toward federal, state, and local goals for ending homelessness among families with children, people in adult-only households, unaccompanied youth, veterans, and people with chronic patterns of homelessness. More recently, these data provide a starting point to our understanding how the public health emergency created by COVID-19 has affected homelessness in the United States.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States in March 2020, affecting six months of the 2020 reporting year. Data presented in this report reflect the considerable disruptions to the homeless service system during this time. Some shelters were closed, and many others reduced the number of beds available for occupancy. Data presented in this report show that the total number of people using shelters declined between 2019 and 2020. This decline likely reflects reduced shelter capacity in some communities, as well as people's reluctance to enter shelters because of health and safety concerns.

### ***Declines in Homelessness Reflect Reduced Inflow into Shelters during the Public Health Emergency***

One-year estimates of sheltered homelessness show a 14 percent decline between 2019 and 2020. These reductions were driven by fewer people entering shelters for the first time or returning to homelessness after some time not using shelters. This decline in people coming into shelters was partly offset by an increase in the number of people already in shelter who remained there.

Sheltered family homelessness dropped by 18 percent, slightly greater than the 12 percent drop in sheltered adult-only homelessness. While health and safety concerns likely made families with children reluctant to use shelters, responses to the public health emergency, including eviction moratoria and increased safety net resources, likely stemmed the flow into the shelter system for families. Family households were most likely to have benefited from those measures because they were working age, were in their own or someone else's housing, and had children.

### ***Disproportionate Shares of Homelessness Among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Persist***

People experiencing sheltered homelessness are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). This holds true regardless of whether people are in families, adults on their own, veterans, unaccompanied youth, or people with chronic patterns of homelessness. There is no sheltered population for which this overrepresentation does not exist. Homelessness reflects a systemic failure resulting from deep poverty, a lack of affordable housing options, and structural racism that exists across our systems. BIPOC populations are overrepresented among the U.S. poverty population, setting up this disproportionate share of people experiencing homelessness. However, even when compared to the U.S. poverty population, BIPOC populations account for a higher share of the one-year estimates of people in sheltered locations.

Families with a parent identifying as Black or African American were particularly overrepresented among people using shelters over the course of the year (54%) compared to the U.S. population (12%) and the U.S. poverty population (24%). This disproportionality worsened between 2019 and 2020, as Black or African American heads of households accounted for a smaller share of all heads of households in the U.S. but a larger share of household heads in shelter programs.

Heads of adult-only households identifying as Indigenous populations, including Native Americans/American Indians, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, accounted for five times the share of people staying in sheltered locations at some point over the course of 2020 (5%) as they did of the U.S. Population of adult-only households (1%) and more than twice the rate of the adult-only poverty population (2%).

Veterans experiencing homelessness were less likely than other people experiencing sheltered homelessness in adult-only households to identify as a race other than white but still far more likely than all U.S. veterans to identify as BIPOC. African Americans accounted for almost three times the share of sheltered veterans as they do of U.S. veterans, and Indigenous populations accounted for four times the share of sheltered veterans.

For the first time, HUD is able to report on the demographic characteristics of people with chronic patterns of homelessness. People who identified as Black or African American accounted for 35 percent of people with chronic patterns of homelessness compared with 12 percent of the U.S. population. Indigenous populations were also considerably overrepresented, accounting for five percent of the sheltered chronically homeless population and, again, for less than one percent of the corresponding U.S. population.

### ***Exiting Homelessness Appears to have been a Challenge for Some During the Pandemic***

Data on system engagement and characteristics of people using shelter programs in 2020 suggest that leaving homelessness was more challenging for some people. In 2020, a slightly higher share family households remained in shelter programs on the last day of the reporting period than did so in 2019. For adult-only households the rate was about the same for both years. While the influx of local and federal resources to strengthen the social safety net reduced inflows into homelessness, eviction moratoria and other homeless prevention efforts also contributed to fewer affordable housing units turning over and becoming available for occupancy. This may have contributed to the reduced placement of households in units supported by rapid re-housing (RRH) rent subsidies. The number of people housed using RRH subsidies declined between 2019 and 2020, despite additional resources allocated to communities in response to the pandemic. These declines were among people using RRH subsidies for less than six months of the data collection period—that is, the period of time covered by the public health emergency.

People who used shelter programs in 2020 were more vulnerable than those who either avoided shelter or were able to leave homelessness. Overall, the number and share of households with chronic patterns of homelessness increased between 2019 and 2020. Among those who left shelter programs, the percentage of both adult-only households and family households that went to other homeless situations increased between 2019 and 2020. In addition, households using shelters in 2020 had higher rates of disability and were more likely to be domestic violence survivors. These findings confirm data presented in the 2021 AHAR Part 1, which reflect the first point-in-time count data collected during the pandemic.

The rest of this chapter highlights findings from each of the chapters in this report that provide estimates of sheltered homelessness for all people, for separate population groups. Given the complex factors affecting changes between 2019 and 2020, these key findings focus only on the 2020 reporting period. Also highlighted here are patterns of use of RRH and permanent supportive housing (PSH) programs during 2020.

### **All People Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness in the U.S.**

- In 2020, an estimated 1,253,000 people in 960,000 households experienced sheltered homelessness at some point during the year.
- Two-thirds were people in households with only adults. Thirty-five percent of people who used shelters were in families with children. Very few (one percent) were child-only households.
- Sixty percent of people experiencing sheltered homelessness in 2020 were doing so for the first time. About 18 percent had returned to homelessness within a two-year period.
- Black or African American people were considerably overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. While representing 12 percent of all U.S. heads of households and 21 percent of heads of households living in poverty, people identifying as Black accounted for 40 percent of heads of sheltered households in 2020.
- Most households experiencing sheltered homelessness were in urban areas (78%); 15 percent were in suburban areas, and seven percent of households using shelters did so in rural areas.
- One in five adults using shelters had a chronic pattern of homelessness (20%).
- Almost one in every ten sheltered adults was a veteran (9%).

### **Adult-Only Households**

- Between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020, nearly 825,000 adults experienced sheltered homelessness in adult-only households.
- Almost six in 10 adult-only households were experiencing sheltered homelessness for the first time in 2020. About one in five (19%) were returning to homelessness.
- Heads of sheltered adult-only households were three times more likely to identify as Black or African American than heads of adult only households in the total U.S. population (38% versus 12%).
- Elderly adults (ages 65 and older) were six percent of sheltered people in adult-only households. By comparison, 27 percent of people living in poverty in adult-only households were elderly.
- While women were a majority of heads of adult-only households living in poverty in 2020 (58%), they accounted for only 29 percent of heads of adult-only households staying in sheltered locations.
- Twenty-two percent of people in sheltered adult-only households had chronic patterns of homelessness in 2020.
- More than half (55%) of people in sheltered adult-only households reported having a disability.

### Families with Children

- In 2020, an estimated 417,000 people in families with children in 132,000 households used an emergency shelter or a transitional housing program, more than a third (35%) of all people who experienced sheltered homelessness over the course of the year.
- More than half of sheltered family households were experiencing sheltered homelessness for the first time (56%) – lower than the share of adult-only households experiencing sheltered homelessness for the first time (60%). Only nine percent of families accessing shelter programs during the 2020 reporting year were returning to sheltered homelessness.
- Families with children were more often headed by women than all families with children in poverty (90% of sheltered families versus 72% of families in poverty).
- People identifying as Black or African American were considerably overrepresented among the sheltered family population. While accounting for 12 percent of heads of all U.S. families and 24 percent of heads of families with children living in poverty, African Americans accounted for 54 percent of heads of sheltered families with children.
- More families were headed by a single parent while experiencing sheltered homelessness than all U.S. families and families living below the poverty line. While 14 percent of all families with children in the U.S. were headed by a single parent, and 35 percent of families living in poverty were headed by a single parent, more than three-fourths of families with children (75%) were in shelter with just one parent.
- In 2020, 32 percent of heads of households and other adults in families with children experiencing sheltered homelessness were survivors of domestic violence, and 15 percent were currently fleeing unsafe situations. Given that this estimate includes only shelters that are not considered domestic violence shelters (which, by law, may not provide data on people experiencing homelessness to HMIS), the percentage of all sheltered homeless families that were fleeing domestic violence in 2020 was likely much higher.

### Unaccompanied Youth

- Between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020, an estimated 93,000 people under the age of 25 used a shelter program on their own, without a parent or guardian and without a child of their own.
- Fourteen percent of unaccompanied youth using shelters in 2020 were minors under the age of 18. Nearly half (49%) were ages 18 to 21, and just over a third (36%) were ages 22-24. People under age 18 who are on their own are rarer in the general population, less than two percent.
- While a majority of unaccompanied homeless youth were men and boys (56%), the unaccompanied homeless youth population was more female than the sheltered adult-only population (42% of unaccompanied youth versus 30% of women in adult-only households).
- Unaccompanied youth staying in shelter were even more likely to be Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) than all sheltered households comprised of only adults. Two-thirds of unaccompanied homeless youth (66%) were BIPOC compared with 58 percent of all adult-only sheltered households.
- More than one in five (22%) of unaccompanied sheltered youth was a survivor of domestic violence, and six percent were currently fleeing domestic violence at the time that they were in a shelter program.
- Unaccompanied youth were twice as likely as adult-only households to be using shelter programs in rural areas (14% vs 7%).
- Nearly 4 of every 10 unaccompanied youth using a shelter program, 39 percent, reported living with some form of disability. Ten percent had a chronic pattern of homelessness, meaning they reported a disability, and they were homeless for 12 months or more.

### Veterans

- Between October 1, 2019, and September 30, 2020, almost 85,000 veterans experienced sheltered homelessness, one in every 160 veterans in the United States.
- Nearly all veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness were in adult-only households rather than in families with children (97%).
- Sheltered veterans were younger than all veterans in the United States. While nearly 60 percent of U.S. veterans in adult-only households were age 65 and older, only 18 percent of sheltered veterans were in that age group. A quarter of sheltered veterans were under the age of 45 in 2020, compared with 11 percent of all veterans.
- Veterans who identified as Black or African American comprised more than a third of veteran heads of households experiencing sheltered homelessness (34%). This is three times the share of all U.S. veteran heads of adult-only households (12%).
- Native American/American Indian and Alaska Native veterans in adult-only households were considerably overrepresented among the sheltered veteran population (4%) compared to their shares of the total veteran population in adult-only households and veterans in poverty (1%).
- Seven of every 10 sheltered veterans (71%) reported a disability in 2020 and 22 percent had a chronic pattern of homelessness.

### People with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness

- Chronic patterns of homelessness were observed for about 194,000 people in adult-only households who used an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some point during 2020.
- Nearly 7 in 10 people with chronic patterns of homelessness were men, and 3 in 10 were women, mirroring the gender distribution of all sheltered adult-only households.
- People with chronic patterns of homelessness who used shelter programs were older than people in all sheltered households with only adults. Thirty percent of people in chronically homeless households were elderly or near elderly – age 55 or older – and 58 percent were age 45 or older. By comparison, only a quarter of all people in sheltered adult-only households were elderly or near elderly, and just under half were age 45 or older (49%).
- Compared with all sheltered adult-only households, heads of chronically homeless households were slightly more likely to be white (45% compared with 42%) and slightly less likely to be Black or African American (38% versus 42%).

### People Living in Housing through RRH Subsidies

- In 2020, 242,000 people in 123,000 households lived in housing supported by RRH rent subsidies. Almost two-thirds (65%) of all people who used RRH in 2020 were in families with children. Just over a third of people in housing with RRH rent subsidies were in adult-only households.
- More than half of the households using RRH to subsidize their permanent housing in 2020 had female heads (53%). This is higher than the percentage of heads of households using shelters who are women (38%) and reflects the relatively greater use of the RRH program by families.
- The share of Black or African American heads of households using RRH subsidies was slightly higher (42%) than their share of households using shelters (40%).
- Most households using RRH during the 2020 reporting period had been in the program less than a year (83%). More than one-third of households were in the RRH program for less than three months as of the end of the reporting period, and 55 percent had been in the program for less than six months.
- Nearly all households that left the RRH program remained in permanent housing. For most households, this meant living in permanent housing without a subsidy. However, about a quarter of all households that left the RRH program went to permanent housing with a subsidy.
- Two percent of adult-only households and one percent of family households that left RRH went directly to homelessness.

- In 2020, 15 percent of heads of households and other adults using RRH programs had had chronic patterns of homelessness before using RRH subsidies to rent permanent housing.

### People Residing in PSH

- An estimated 380,000 people were living in PSH in 2020. More than two-thirds were people in adult-only households, and one-third were people in families with children.
- About 64 percent of households in PSH were headed by men, and 36 percent by women. Less than one percent were headed by someone identifying as either transgender or gender non-conforming.
- People living in PSH were older than people staying in shelters. More than one-third of PSH residents were elderly or near elderly – age 55 or older (36%)—which was double the share of people staying in shelter programs who were in that age group (18%).
- Black or African American heads of households accounted for a similar share of households in PSH as in shelter programs (41% and 40%) while white, non-Hispanic heads of households accounted for a slightly higher share of PSH households than in shelter programs (44% and 40%).
- Nearly a third of residents of PSH had lived there for five years or more (34%), and more than half (53%) had been in PSH for more than three years.
- In 2020, nine percent of heads of households and other adults living in PSH retained the chronic homeless status – meaning they had been homeless for 12 months or more within the last three years. The share of adults in PSH with retained chronically homeless status was highest in rural areas and lowest in suburban areas.
- Disabling conditions are often a prerequisite for entry into PSH, and most heads of households and other adults in PSH had a disability in 2020 (85%). This was much higher than the rate of disability for heads of households and other adults staying in shelters (49%).
- Veterans accounted for 29 percent of adults in PSH, compared with 10 percent of adults in sheltered locations. This includes some veterans in permanent supportive housing provided through the HUD-VASH program.
- Two-thirds of family households left PSH for another permanent housing destination (67%), not including PSH, most often to their own housing either with a subsidy (25%) or without a subsidy (28%). The share of adult-only households exiting to permanent housing was lower (43%).
- Seven percent of adult-only households and three percent of family households exited PSH directly to a homeless situation.

### System Engagement of People Accessing Shelter in 2020

The Longitudinal System Analysis data include information on the combination of programs used by households during the reporting period, whether they had left shelter programs by the end of the reporting period, and where they went.

- Nearly all households that used a shelter program in 2020 did not also use RRH subsidies or live in PSH (93%). Four percent used both shelter and RRH subsidies, two percent stayed in shelter and also lived in PSH, and less than one percent used all three.
- A smaller share of families used only shelter programs in 2020 than adult-only households (89% vs 93%). Ten percent of families who stayed in shelter also used a RRH subsidy, compared with four percent of adult-only households.
- Adult-only households who stayed in shelters were more likely than families to have left the shelter system by the end of the reporting period. Only 18 percent were still in a shelter program on September 30, 2020, compared with 29 percent of family households.
- In 2020, 23 percent of adult-only households and 53 percent of family households that exited shelter programs did so to a permanent housing destination.

## Key Terms

**Adults** are people age 18 or older.

**Adult-Only Household** refers to a household with just one adult or two or more adults without children.

**Child-Only Households** refers to a household with just one child or composed of two or more children.

**Children** are people under the age of 18.

**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.

**Domestic Violence Shelters** are shelter programs for people who are homeless and are survivors of domestic violence.

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

**Family with Children** refers to a household that has at least one adult (age 18 or older) and one child (under age 18). Families do not include households composed only of adults or only children.

**Head of Household** is the member of the family or household to whom all other members of the household are associated in HMIS. For families and adult-only households, the head of household must be an adult. In a child-only household, the parent of another child is designated as the head of household; otherwise, each child in a household without adults is designated as a head of household.

**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** is a software application designed to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless people. Each CoC maintains its own HMIS, which can be tailored to meet local needs but must also conform to Federal HMIS Data and Technical Standards.

**HMIS Data** provide an unduplicated count of people who are experiencing sheltered homelessness and information about their characteristics and service-use patterns over a one-year period. These data are entered into each CoC's HMIS at the client level but are submitted in aggregate form for the AHAR.

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

**Household Type** refers to the composition of a household upon entering a shelter program. People enter shelter as unaccompanied youth, single adults, or as part of a family with children but can be served as both adults in adult-only households and

as members of a family with children during the AHAR reporting year. The estimates reported in the AHAR adjust for this overlap and thus provide an unduplicated count of homeless people.

**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.

**HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program** is a program for formerly homeless veterans that combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance provided by HUD with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) through VA medical centers (VAMCs) and community-based outreach clinics.

**Multiple Races** refers to people who self-identify as more than one race.

**One-Year Shelter Count** is an unduplicated count of people experiencing homelessness who use an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at any time from October through September of the following year. The one-year count is derived from communities' Homeless Management Information Systems.

**Other Largely Urban CoCs** are CoCs in which the population predominantly resides in an urbanized area within a principal city, but the CoC does not contain one of the 50 largest cities in the United States.

**Other One Race** refers to a person who self-identifies as being one of the following races: Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.

**Parenting Children** are people under age 18 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 the child parent and there is no person over the age of 18 in the household.

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

**Parenting Youth** are people under age 25 who are the parents or legal guardians of one or more children (under age 18) and who are present with or sleeping in the same place as that youth parent and 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 with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness<sup>4</sup>** are individuals with a disability who

<sup>4</sup> The definition of chronic homelessness changed in 2016. The previous definition was an individual with a disability who had either been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or had experienced at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years.



have been continuously homeless for one year or more or have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years with a combined length of time homeless of at least 12 months.

**Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** is a program designed to provide housing (project- or tenant-based) and supportive services on a long-term basis to formerly homeless people. HUD McKinney-Vento-funded programs require that the client have a disability for program eligibility, and most people in PSH have disabilities.

**Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)** 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** are projects that provide private or semi-private long-term housing for people with severe mental illness and are limited to serving no more than 25 people within a facility.

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

**Shelter Programs** include emergency shelter programs, safe havens, and transitional housing programs.

**Total U.S. Population** refers to people who are housed (including those in group quarters) in the United States, as reported in the American Community Survey (ACS) by the U.S. Census Bureau.

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

**Unaccompanied Children** are people 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 Youth (18 to 24)** are people 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.

**Unduplicated Count of Sheltered Homelessness** is an estimate of people who stayed in emergency shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing programs that counts each person only once, even if the person enters and exits the shelter system multiple times throughout the year within a CoC.

**U.S. Population Living in Poverty** refers to people who are housed in the United States in households with incomes that fall below the federal poverty level.

**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.

**Victim Service Provider** refers to private nonprofit organizations whose primary mission is to provide direct services to survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. This term includes rape crisis centers, domestic violence programs battered women's (shelters and non-residential), domestic violence transitional housing programs, and other related advocacy and supportive services programs.



# Broader Perspectives on Housing Instability

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## Broader Perspectives on Housing Instability

Federal agencies and their state and local partners use data to inform a broad set of policy solutions across many different programs to meet goals the nation has set for preventing and ending homelessness. Ending homelessness cannot rely solely on programs that are targeted to people experiencing homelessness. Homelessness is closely linked to housing affordability, income and employment, health (including physical, behavioral, and mental disabilities), and education. The mainstream programs that address these needs have a substantial role in preventing and ending homelessness.

The section provides a broader perspective on housing instability and includes information on people who are precariously housed because they are doubled up, couch surfing, or paying unsustainable shares of their income for rent. This is not the “literal” definition of homelessness, which generally encompasses those staying in a shelter or in a place not intended for human habitation. The section also provides additional information on particular groups of people who are in unstable situations: school children, youth, and survivors of domestic violence.

Following are discussions of:

- People who are at risk of homelessness because of cost burdens, unsafe housing, or staying temporarily in someone else’s housing:
  - Very low-income renters who are severely rent burdened or live in severely inadequate housing, based on the 2019 American Housing Survey (AHS), as analyzed for HUD’s Worst Case Needs report;
  - People who are doubled up, based on a special supplement of the 2013 AHS.
- Other data on homeless and doubled up children and youth:
  - School aged children who are doubled up or in other homeless situations, based on the definition used by and data reported to the U.S. Department of Education by State Education Agencies (SEAs);
  - Unaccompanied youth aged 13 to 25 who are homeless or couch surfing, based on the Voices of Youth Count (VoYC) study.
- Survivors of domestic violence:
  - Survivors of domestic violence who use shelters for victims of domestic violence as well as the shelters that are permitted to report to the HMIS, based on Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data submitted to HUD by local communities.

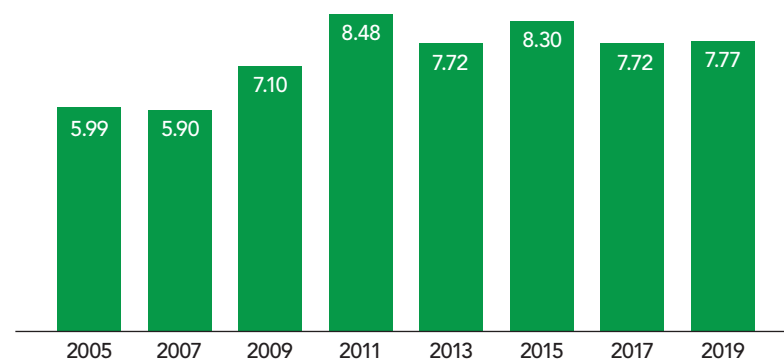
### People who are At-Risk of Homelessness

#### Very Low Income Renters in Precarious Housing Situations (HUD 2021 Worst Case Needs Report)

HUD submits reports to Congress every other year on renter households with severe needs for affordable housing or housing assistance. Prepared by HUD’s Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R), the Worst Case Needs reports are based on detailed tabulations of data in the American Housing Survey (AHS). The analysis focuses on the availability, quality, and costs of rental housing units relative to the incomes of the housing’s occupants. Households with worst case needs are defined as renters with incomes below 50 percent of area median income (AMI) who do not have housing assistance and are living in severely inadequate housing, paying more than half of their income for rent, or both. The most recent report reflects data on renters prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not yet known how the economic impacts of the pandemic, or the offsetting fiscal relief packages affected level of worst case housing needs in 2020.

The 2021 *Worst Case Housing Needs* report is based on data for 2019. In 2019, 7.77 million renter households had worst case needs - a slight increase (0.6%) from 7.72 million in 2017. The slight increase was associated with the continued increase in the number of renters with extremely low incomes, those with incomes below 30 percent of AMI. While worst case needs have not returned to the levels associated with the Great Recession, 32 percent more renters had worst case needs in 2019

#### EXHIBIT B.1: Growth in Worst Case Housing Needs (in millions of people) 2005-2019



Source: American Housing Survey data, 2019. The exhibit is reproduced from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Worst Case Housing Needs: 2021 Report to Congress* and *Worst Case Housing Needs: 2011 Report to Congress*. Office of Policy Development and Research: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/taxonomy/term/43>

### EXHIBIT B.2: Affordable, Available, and Adequate Rental Units by Income of Renters

2019

| Income Category                                    | Rental Units per 100 Renter Households |                          |                                     |
|--|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|  | Affordable                             | Affordable and Available | Affordable, Available, and Adequate |
| Extremely low-income renter households (0–30% AMI) | 70.3                                   | 40.3                     | 35.7                                |
| Very low-income renter households (0–50% AMI)      | 96.0                                   | 62.2                     | 54.7                                |
| Low-income renter households (0–80% AMI)           | 135.3                                  | 97.3                     | 87.2                                |

Source: American Housing Survey data, 2019. The exhibit is produced from data presented in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Worst Case Housing Needs: 2021 Report to Congress*. Office of Policy Development and Research: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Worst-Case-Housing-Needs-2021.pdf>

Note: AMI=Area Median Income

than in 2007. Almost all households with worst case needs (97.5%) pay more than half their income for rent, an untenable situation that puts people at risk of homelessness.<sup>1</sup>

As in previous years, the 2021 report describes the mismatch the number of renters with incomes below 50 percent and 30 percent of AMI and the numbers of units available to those renters. The report measures this mismatch by looking at whether units are affordable, available, and adequate:

- **Affordability** measures the extent to which rental housing units have rents for which a household at a certain income level would pay no more than 30 percent of its income.
- **Availability** measures the extent to which rental housing units are not just affordable but also available to households in a certain income range, meaning that a household within that range occupies the unit or that the unit is vacant.
- **Adequacy** identifies whether a unit that is affordable and available is also physically adequate based on the condition of the housing unit and its plumbing, heating, and electrical systems.<sup>2</sup>

The rental housing stock that was affordable was scarcest for the lowest income renters. Nationally, for every 100 renters with extremely low incomes (incomes 30 percent or less of AMI), only 70 rental units were affordable. Moreover, many of these rental units were occupied by households with relatively higher incomes,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/taxonomy/term/43>

<sup>2</sup> A detailed description of the housing unit characteristics that determine adequacy are in Appendix E of the *Worst Case Housing Needs: 2021 Report to Congress*.

### EXHIBIT B.3: Rental Housing Stock Was Insufficient for Extremely Low-Income Renters Across All Regions

2019

| Income Category                                    | Housing Units per 100 Renters |                          |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|  | Affordable                    | Affordable and Available | Affordable, Available, and Adequate |
| <b>Northeast</b>                                   |                               |                          |                                     |
| Extremely low-income renter households (0–30% AMI) | 75.5                          | 46.1                     | 40.9                                |
| Very low-income renter households (0–50% AMI)      | 91.9                          | 62.9                     | 56.2                                |
| Low-income renter households (0–80% AMI)           | 125.8                         | 92.8                     | 82.4                                |
| <b>Midwest</b>                                     |                               |                          |                                     |
| Extremely low-income renter households (0–30% AMI) | 77.9                          | 44.2                     | 40.0                                |
| Very low-income renter households (0–50% AMI)      | 128.7                         | 79.7                     | 71.4                                |
| Low-income renter households (0–80% AMI)           | 157.0                         | 110.6                    | 100.6                               |
| <b>South</b>                                       |                               |                          |                                     |
| Extremely low-income renter households (0–30% AMI) | 73.0                          | 39.9                     | 34.9                                |
| Very low-income renter households (0–50% AMI)      | 99.0                          | 63.6                     | 54.6                                |
| Low-income renter households (0–80% AMI)           | 141.1                         | 101.2                    | 89.8                                |
| <b>West</b>  |                               |                          |                                     |
| Extremely low-income renter households (0–30% AMI) | 54.2                          | 31.9                     | 28.3                                |
| Very low-income renter households (0–50% AMI)      | 66.9                          | 44.3                     | 38.9                                |
| Low-income renter households (0–80% AMI)           | 115.9                         | 83.8                     | 75.9                                |

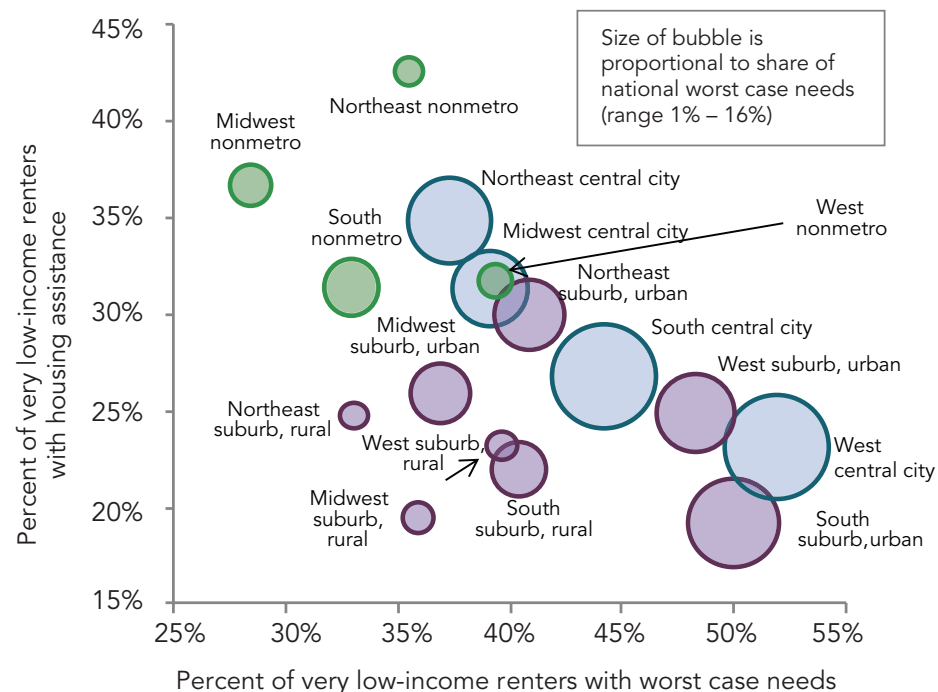
Source: American Housing Survey data, 2019. The exhibit is produced from data presented in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Worst Case Housing Needs: 2021 Report to Congress*. Office of Policy Development and Research: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Worst-Case-Housing-Needs-2021.pdf>

Note: AMI=Area Median Income

leaving only 40 units both affordable and available, and only 36 units affordable, available, and adequate for every 100 renters with extremely low incomes.

The mismatch between the number of affordable units and the number of extremely low-income renters is most severe in the West, the same region where the rise in homelessness has outpaced other areas of the country. In the West there were 54 rental units affordable for every 100 extremely low-income renters in 2019. In other regions, the mismatch was less severe, ranging from 73 to 78 rental units affordable for every 100 renters with extremely low incomes. The pattern of regional differences is similar for units that are affordable and available and for units that are affordable, available, and adequate. The West had the highest percentage of renters

**EXHIBIT B.4: Worst Case Needs by Prevalence of Housing Assistance in 2019**



Source: HUD-PD&R tabulations of American Housing Survey data, 2019. The exhibit is reproduced from data presented in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Worst Case Housing Needs: 2021 Report to Congress*. Office of Policy Development and Research, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Worst-Case-Housing-Needs-2021.pdf>

with worst case needs and a low percentage of renters with housing assistance. The prevalence of low-income renters with worst case needs tends to be higher in areas where housing assistance is more limited. See Exhibit B.4.

A third of households with worst case needs are single individuals or unrelated people sharing a housing unit none of whom 62 years or older, 2.54 million of the 7.77 worst case needs households in 2019. This group also has the highest rate of worst case needs among renters with incomes below 50 percent of AMI, 45.9 percent in 2019. Most are single individuals, a group also heavily represented among people experiencing homelessness.

**People Who are Doubled Up in Other People’s Housing (American Housing Survey 2013 Doubling Up Supplement)**

“Doubling up” can mean many things and sometimes refers to multigenerational households or to people who share housing on a long-term basis in order to save on housing costs. A supplement to the 2013 AHS<sup>3</sup> was designed to learn about different forms of doubling up, including those in less stable living situations. Respondents<sup>4</sup> were asked a series of questions about household members who had moved out of the housing unit within the past year and about household members who had moved into the unit within the past year. The questions were asked about people who stayed for at least two weeks and had no other usual residence.

**Household Members Who Moved Out in the Past 12 months**

In 2013, 4.4 million households had at least one member who had moved out in the last year.<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> This large number of households can reflect a variety of circumstances—for example, a college student who was at home during summer break and returned to school; an elderly person who was living with family and moved into assisted living; or someone who moved to a new city and stayed with a friend until finding his or her own place. To more fully understand the nature of the mover’s stay and the mover’s destination, the 2013 AHS supplement asked additional questions. The answers to those questions reveal a subset of people who may be vulnerable to experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness. Exhibit B.5 shows the reasons household members moved out of the respondent’s housing unit and the household members’ destination upon moving.

Of the households with at least one member who moved out in the past year, 27.1 percent were reported by the respondent to have been staying because of a lack of money to pay for housing. Other questions asked about whether movers left voluntarily, and the main reason people moved out. According to the respondents, 7.3 percent of household members who moved were asked to leave, 320,000 movers.

<sup>3</sup> Details about the AHS and the Doubling Up supplement can be found at: <http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/2013/> and <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/>. If more than one person or group of people moved into or out of a household, questions were tabulated for the first person or group of in-movers and the first person or group of out-movers listed by the respondent.

<sup>4</sup> These questions were asked of a knowledgeable household member age 16 or over. In most cases, the respondent was the head of household.

<sup>5</sup> The AHS National Summary Tables (Table S-07\_AO) are available at: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/2013/ahs-2013-summary-tables/national-summary-report-and-tables---ahs-2013.html>

<sup>6</sup> These questions were restricted to occupied housing units where a person or group of people moved out within 12 months prior to the interview or since the current occupants moved in when that was less than a year before the interview. Household members moving out included anyone who stayed in the home for at least 2 weeks and had no other place where he or she usually lived. While respondents were instructed to only include people who had stayed at least two weeks, a small percentage of households were reported with a length of stay less than 2 weeks. They included minors who moved out without a parent or guardian.

When asked about the main reason the household member or members moved out, 5.7 percent were reported to have moved out because of crowding and conflict or violence in the housing unit, and 12.4 percent moved out because of financial reasons.<sup>7</sup>

Few household members who moved out (less than one percent) were reported by the respondent to have gone to a shelter program or a place not meant for human habitation,<sup>8</sup> but a quarter went to stay with family or friends rather than to a place of their own. Some household members went to settings that are known to be closely associated with risk of homelessness: an institutional health facility, such as a treatment program, hospital, or nursing home (1.6 percent or 67,000 movers), jail or prison (0.4 percent or 17,000 movers), or foster care (0.3 percent or 11,000 movers).

### Household Members Who Moved In during the Past 12 Months

The AHS supplement also asked questions about households with at least one member who moved into an existing household's unit in the past year and who was still there at the time of the AHS interview.<sup>9</sup> In 2013, there were 3.3 million such households. This large number of households can reflect a range of circumstances—for example, a new spouse or partner moving into the partner's unit, a new baby born to the family, a college student who moved home after leaving school, or an elderly person who was living on his or her own and moved in with family. To more fully understand the nature of the mover's stay and the mover's prior living situation, the 2013 AHS supplement asked respondents<sup>10</sup> additional questions. The answers to those questions reveal a subset of people who are doubled-up and vulnerable to experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness. Exhibit B.6 summarizes the reasons household members moved into an existing household's unit and the living situation from which they moved.

Of the households with at least one member who moved into an existing

<sup>7</sup> Financial reasons could include the inability to contribute to the housing costs in their host's unit but also include a mover's ability to pay for their own housing.

<sup>8</sup> This is a smaller number than the number of people staying in shelters at some time during 2014 who were reported by the HMIS to have come from staying with friends or relatives. These numbers are based on different methods of identifying people who become homeless: the AHS questions were answered by a household member who remained in the housing unit, whereas the prior living situation was reported to the HMIS by the person currently experiencing homelessness.

<sup>9</sup> These data are based on HUD-PD&R tabulations of 2013 American Housing Survey data. They differ from figures presented in the AHS national summary Table S-07\_AO. Table S-07\_AO includes both in-movers in the past 12 months who formed entirely new households and those who moved into existing households. Exhibit B.6 includes only those who moved into a pre-existing household.

<sup>10</sup> These questions were asked about the person (or group of people) who moved into an occupied housing unit containing a pre-existing household and who moved in within 12 months prior to the interview. The respondent who answered these questions was a knowledgeable household member age 16 or over, not necessarily someone who recently moved into the existing household.

household's unit in the past year, 24.6 percent were reported to have moved in because of a lack of money to pay for housing. Other questions asked about whether they left their prior situation voluntarily and the main reason they left. According to the respondents, 5.3 percent (170,000 in-movers) were asked to leave their prior situation. When asked about the main reason for leaving their prior situation, 7.1 percent of people were reported to have experienced crowding, conflict, or violence, and 18.7 percent were reported to have moved for financial reasons.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Respondents could have interpreted this as either positive or negative financial reasons.

### EXHIBIT B.5: Reasons Household Members Moved Out of the Respondent's Housing Unit and Where They Moved

|   | # Housing Units  | %     |
|---|------------------|-------|
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>4,421,000</b> |       |
| <b>Reason for stay</b>                                |                  |       |
| Lack of money   | 1,191,000        | 27.1% |
| Other reasons (not lack of money)                     | 3,200,000        | 72.9% |
| <b>Asked to Leave</b>                                 |                  |       |
| Yes   | 320,000          | 7.3%  |
| No  | 4,089,000        | 92.7% |
| <b>Main Reason for Leaving</b>                        |                  |       |
| Financial   | 543,000          | 12.4% |
| Crowding, conflict or violence                        | 250,000          | 5.7%  |
| Other reasons <sup>a</sup>                            | 3,585,000        | 81.9% |
| <b>Destination</b>                                    |                  |       |
| Moved to the home of relatives/friends                | 1,084,000        | 25.3% |
| Moved to homeless situation <sup>b</sup>              | 13,000           | 0.3%  |
| Moved to treatment program, hospital, or nursing home | 67,000           | 1.6%  |
| Moved to jail or prison                               | 17,000           | 0.4%  |
| Moved to foster care                                  | 11,000           | 0.3%  |
| Moved to another situation <sup>c</sup>               | 3,090,000        | 72.2% |

Source: Table S-07-AO of the 2013 AHS National Summary tables

Note: The number of housing units is rounded to the nearest thousand. Those "not reported" are excluded.

a Other reasons for leaving the housing unit included a major change in the family (e.g., marriage, new relationship, divorce, death, separation), health reasons, to be closer to work or job, school or military, or to establish one's own household.

b A homeless situation was defined as staying in a shelter program or in a place not meant for human habitation such as a park, street, sidewalk, car, or abandoned building.

c Other situations included one's own place, dormitories, and barracks.



### EXHIBIT B.6: Reasons Household Members Moved Into an Existing Household’s Housing Unit and the Situation from Which They Moved

|   | # Housing Units  | %     |
|---|------------------|-------|
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>3,269,000</b> |       |
| <b>Reason for Stay in Current Home</b>                  |                  |       |
| Lack of money   | 787,000          | 24.6% |
| Other reasons (not lack of money)                       | 2,416,000        | 75.4% |
| <b>Asked to Leave Prior Situation</b>                   |                  |       |
| Yes   | 170,000          | 5.3%  |
| No  | 3,025,000        | 94.7% |
| <b>Main Reason for Leaving Prior Situation</b>          |                  |       |
| Financial   | 599,000          | 18.7% |
| Crowding, conflict or violence                          | 227,000          | 7.1%  |
| Other reasons <sup>a</sup>                              | 2,371,000        | 74.1% |
| <b>Place Stayed Prior to Current Home</b>               |                  |       |
| Moved from home of relatives/friends                    | 1,056,000        | 33.1% |
| Moved from a homeless situation <sup>b</sup>            | 18,000           | 0.6%  |
| Moved from treatment program, hospital, or nursing home | 11,000           | 0.4%  |
| Moved from jail or prison                               | 7,000            | 0.2%  |
| Moved from foster care                                  | 18,000           | 0.6%  |
| Moved from another situation <sup>c</sup>               | 2,081,000        | 65.2% |

Source: HUD-PD&R tabulations of 2013 American Housing Survey data

Note: The number of housing units is rounded to the nearest thousand. Those “not reported” are excluded.

<sup>a</sup> Other reasons for leaving the housing unit included a major change in the family (e.g., marriage, new relationship, divorce, death, separation), health reasons, to be closer to work or job, school or military, or to establish one’s own household.

<sup>b</sup> A homeless situation was defined as staying in a shelter program or in a place not meant for human habitation such as a park, street, sidewalk, car, or abandoned building.

<sup>c</sup> Other situations included one’s own place, dormitories, and barracks.

### The Census Household Pulse Survey on Housing Insecurity by Household Type

The Census Household Pulse Survey (HPS) is an experimental, longitudinal survey designed to quickly capture information about household social and economic experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>12</sup> It is designed to be a short-turnaround survey instrument that can be used to quickly examine social,

<sup>12</sup> For more information about the Census Household Pulse Survey, see: <https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/household-pulse-survey.html>.

economic, and health information to aid COVID-19 pandemic recovery.<sup>13</sup> First fielded in April 2020, the HPS collects important information about housing circumstances and the associated impacts of the ongoing housing crisis. The HPS data can provide insight into the decline in sheltered homelessness seen in 2020 by examining households reporting being behind on rental payments by household type.

#### Housing Insecurity During the Covid-19 Pandemic by Household Type

The HPS asks respondents the following question: “*Is this household currently caught up on rent payments? Select only one answer.*” There are two options: “Yes and “No”. This question is only asked to respondents who answered “rented” to the following question: “*Is your house or apartment...?*” The data analysis included in this section used the HPS data to examine one key outcome: behind on rental payments.

Prior to the pandemic, the 2017 American Housing Survey (AHS) showed approximately 7 percent of renter households reported being behind on their rent. When compared to the 2017 AHS, HPS results suggest that the number of renter households reporting being behind on rental payments more than doubled. For example, from April 2020 to October 2020 (covering some of the 2020 AHAR reporting period), approximately 15 percent of U.S. renter households reported being behind on rental payments, where it remained through the end of 2021.

According to the HPS, families with children had higher rates of being behind on rent payments compared to single adults or other households without children. Between April and October of 2020, 26 percent of single parents with children and 22 percent of families with two or more adults and children were behind on rental payments. By comparison, nine percent of young single adults, 12 percent of single, middle-aged adults, and 11 percent of households composed of two adults were behind on rental payments.

However, the estimates of households behind on rental payments are likely much higher than reported here. The Pulse survey suffers from an overall low response rate, which has led some researchers to voice concerns about nonresponse bias. An examination of responses found likely nonresponse bias, and response patterns did differ by sociodemographic characteristics. Second, limited sample size can produce unstable estimates, especially when sub-setting outcomes data by demographic information (for example, race and ethnicity). By pooling multiple weeks of data, estimates become more stable; however, researchers lose more nuanced estimates over time. Lastly, when using Census-provided household-level weights, analyses

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Releases New Experimental “Pulse” Surveys to Track Temporal Trends in Small Business and Households During the COVID-19 Pandemic. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/pulse-surveys.html>

### EXHIBIT B.7: Percentage of U.S. Renter Households Behind on Rental Payments, by Household Type

| Data Collection Period      | Renters | One Adult with Children | Two or More Adults with Children | Elderly Retired | Young, Single Adult | Single, Middle-Aged Adult | Two Adults, No Children |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Aug 19 – Oct 26 (2020)      | 15.3%   | 25.7%                   | 21.8%                            | 7.2%            | 9.2%                | 12.1%                     | 11.4%                   |
| Oct 28 – Jan 18 (2020-2021) | 18.1%   | 29.9%                   | 26.0%                            | 8.4%            | 12.6%               | 14.6%                     | 13.1%                   |
| Jan 20 – Mar 29 (2021)      | 16.5%   | 27.3%                   | 23.9%                            | 8.0%            | 10.2%               | 13.8%                     | 12.0%                   |
| Apr 12 – Jun 21 (2021)      | 14.1%   | 22.5%                   | 19.2%                            | 6.1%            | 7.1%                | 12.3%                     | 11.3%                   |
| Jun 23 – Aug 30 (2021)      | 15.0%   | 28.1%                   | 19.5%                            | 8.4%            | 8.9%                | 12.6%                     | 11.6%                   |
| Sep 1 – Dec 13 (2021)       | 14.8%   | 24.2%                   | 21.7%                            | 7.5%            | 7.8%                | 12.1%                     | 11.5%                   |

Source: Census Household Pulse Survey, August 2020 to December 2021

suggest there are approximately 33 million U.S. renter households. However, the 2019 American Housing Survey shows the true estimate was approximately 44.7 million renter households.<sup>14</sup> To alleviate this discrepancy, HUD reweights all household-level estimates using 2019 AHS renter estimates as control totals when developing estimated weighted frequencies.

### Education Data on Children and Youth

#### Doubled up and Other Homeless Situations of Children and Youth (Data from State Educational Agencies)

Children and youth who experience homelessness are more likely than housed children to have high rates of acute and chronic health problems and exposure to violence. Their academic performance is also at risk, as unstable housing often contributes to frequent school mobility and chronic absenteeism. The U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program<sup>15</sup> provides grants to State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, that is provided to other children and youth. Grantee activities include efforts to improve enrollment and retention in, and successful completion of, early childhood, elementary, and secondary education for children who experience homelessness, as well as to support transitions to postsecondary education. The information presented below on homeless education data collected by U.S. public schools

<sup>14</sup> See: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/interactive/ahstablecreator.html>.

<sup>15</sup> The EHCY program is authorized under Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended in 2015 by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

comes from a report by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE), the U.S. Department of Education’s technical assistance center for the federal EHCY program.<sup>16</sup>

ED collects data from SEAs about children and youth ages 3 through grade 12 who are enrolled in U.S. public schools, including public preschool programs, whose primary nighttime residence at any time during a school year was:

1. a shelter, or transitional housing program, or awaiting foster care placement,<sup>17</sup>
2. unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, temporary trailers, substandard or abandoned buildings);
3. a hotel or motel because of the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; or
4. sharing the housing of other people due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (i.e., doubled-up).

ED uses these primary nighttime residence categories to identify those students who are eligible for services under the EHCY program. According to ED data,<sup>18</sup> during the 2019-20 school year (SY), 1,280,886 students were identified – at some point during the school year – as having experienced homelessness, representing an eight percent decrease from the prior school year (106,687 fewer students). In SY 2019-20, most children and youth identified as homeless by U.S. public schools (78%) were sharing the housing of other people because of housing loss or other economic hardship or similar reason; 11 percent were in shelters or transitional housing<sup>19</sup>; 7 percent were living in a hotel or motel because of the lack of alternate, adequate accommodations; and 4 percent were identified as unsheltered.

In each school year between 2017 and 2020, the number of students identified in each primary nighttime residence category decreased. For example, the number identified as sharing the housing of other people because of loss of housing,

<sup>16</sup> For more information on the data cited, see NCHE’s [Student Homelessness in America: School Years 2017-18 to 2019-20](https://www.nche.ed.gov/data-and-stats/). Reports including data from previous school years can be accessed at <https://www.nche.ed.gov/data-and-stats/>.

<sup>17</sup> “Awaiting foster care placement” was removed from the definition of *homeless children and youths* when the McKinney-Vento Act was amended in 2015. For covered states (i.e., states that have a statutory law that defines or describes the phrase awaiting foster care placement for the purposes of a program under the McKinney-Vento Act) the effective date for this change was December 10, 2017. For uncovered states, the effective date for this change was December 10, 2016. As a result, all states reported students as homeless due to awaiting foster care placement in SY 2015-16, while only a small number of states did so in SYs 2016-17 and 2017-18.

<sup>18</sup> See Table 2 (pg. 7) of NCHE’s [Student Homelessness in America: School Years 2017-18 to 2019-20](https://www.nche.ed.gov/data-and-stats/).

<sup>19</sup> This category previously included students awaiting foster care placement. This was removed from the homeless definition in the McKinney-Vento Act and is no longer included in SY 2018-19 or SY 2019-20 data.

### EXHIBIT B.8: Number of Enrolled Students in Homeless Situations by Primary Nighttime Residence

School Years 2013-14 through 2019-20<sup>a</sup>

|   | 2013-14 <sup>b</sup> | 2014-15 <sup>c</sup> | 2015-16 <sup>d</sup> | 2016-17 <sup>d</sup> | 2017-18 <sup>d</sup> | 2018-19 <sup>e</sup> | 2019-20 <sup>f</sup> |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1,298,236</b>     | <b>1,261,461</b>     | <b>1,303,207</b>     | <b>1,355,435</b>     | <b>1,507,904</b>     | <b>1,379,043</b>     | <b>1,279,039</b>     |
| Shelters, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care placement | 186,265              | 181,386              | 187,137              | 187,879              | 182,659              | 167,634              | 146,769              |
| Unsheltered   | 42,003               | 39,421               | 43,245               | 50,187               | 102,527              | 55,306               | 52,307               |
| Hotels/Motels   | 80,124               | 82,159               | 85,026               | 90,087               | 105,574              | 97,640               | 88,663               |
| Doubled Up  | 989,844              | 958,495              | 987,799              | 1,027,282            | 1,117,144            | 1,058,463            | 991,300              |

<sup>a</sup> When comparing the total number of children and youth experiencing homelessness enrolled by grade level with the total number of children and youth experiencing homelessness enrolled by primary nighttime residence for any given school year, readers may note a small difference. This is because each school year, a small number of enrolled children and youth were missing a primary nighttime residence category.

<sup>b</sup> See Table 5, p. 15, of NCHES [Federal Data Summary School Years 2013-14 to 2015-16](#).

<sup>c</sup> See Table 5, p. 15, of NCHES [Federal Data Summary School Years 2014-15 to 2016-17](#).

<sup>d</sup> See Table 6, p. 14, of NCHES [Federal Data Summary School Years 2015-16 through 2017-18](#).

<sup>e</sup> See Table 6, p. 14, of NCHES [Federal Data Summary School Years 2016-17 through 2018-19](#).

<sup>f</sup> See Table 3, p. 8, of NCHES [Student Homelessness in America: School Years 2017-18 to 2019-20](#).

economic hardship, or a similar reason decreased by 11 percent between the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years (125,844 fewer students). The number of students who were identified as having a primary nighttime residence of an unsheltered location decreased significantly, by 49 percent (50,220 fewer students). However, the data for SY 2019-20 should be viewed with caution, as many students were attending school remotely during the last quarter of that school year, possibly limiting the ability of districts to identify students as experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

While it is not possible to attribute the decrease in unsheltered children and youth to a specific cause with certainty, the spike in unsheltered children in during the 2017-18 school year likely reflected severe weather events that occurred in some states, including Hurricane Harvey (August/September 2017) in the state of Texas. Data collection guidance from ED defines *unsheltered* as follows: children and youth living in cars, parks, campgrounds, temporary trailers, abandoned buildings, and substandard housing.<sup>20</sup> This definition includes FEMA trailers and other temporary dwellings that were relied on heavily in response to hurricanes and other natural disasters. While unsheltered homelessness among students doubled between SY 2017-18 and SY 2018-19, it halved the following year, dropping by 46

<sup>20</sup> See p. C-9 of NCHES [Guide to Collecting & Reporting Federal Data](#)

#### State Education Agency Data, HMIS Data, and Point in Time Data

The homeless education data reported by the U.S. Department of Education differ from the HMIS and PIT data reported to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in several ways. These different data sources can be used in combination for planning and policymaking to determine the appropriate scale and range of programs needed to best respond to populations experiencing different forms of homelessness, as defined by federal housing and education statutes.

- SEA data are reported by school and district personnel and generally verified by school district homeless education liaisons and State Coordinators for Homeless Education. HMIS data are reported by homeless service provider staff. PIT count data are reported by communities based on counts of people in shelter programs and unsheltered locations.
- SEA data cover a July 1 to June 30 period; the availability of data on school children during the summer may be limited. HMIS data used in the AHAR cover a period from October 1 through September 30. PIT count data are for a single night in January.
- SEA data include children staying in hotels or motels due to the lack of alternate, adequate accommodations. HMIS data include people staying in hotels or motels only if those accommodations are subsidized through a homeless assistance program.
- SEA data include children and youth sharing the housing of other people due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (often referred to as living in “doubled-up” arrangements or “couch-surfing”). The HUD definition of homeless does not include people in doubled-up or couch-surfing arrangements; as such, this population is not represented in HMIS data.
- SEA data reflects information on children and youth from age 3 through grade 12 enrolled in public school. HMIS and PIT count data include children under age 3. SEA data include some youth over the age of 18 who are still in public school. HMIS and PIT count data include all people aged 18 and over in a separate category from those under age 18. The PIT count data report all youth who are ages 18 to 24 in a separate category.

percent. This number continued to decline by five percent between SY 2018-19 and SY 2019-20.

In addition to reporting data on children and youth identified as homeless under

## EXHIBIT B.9: Number and Percentage of Enrolled Homeless Students Who Are Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

School Years 2013-14 through 2019-20<sup>a</sup>

|   | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of unaccompanied homeless youth enrolled | 111,753 | 118,364 | 129,370 | 125,729 | 112,822 |
| Percent of homeless students                    | 8.5     | 8.7     | 8.6     | 9.1     | 8.8     |

Sources: [Federal Data Summary: School Years 2015-16 through 2017-18](#); [Federal Data Summary: School Years 2016-17 through 2018-19](#); [Student Homelessness in America: School Years 2017-18 to 2019-20](#).

federal education statute by grade level and primary nighttime residence, U.S. public schools also report data on unaccompanied youth. The term *unaccompanied youth* is defined in federal education statute as “a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.” Unaccompanied youth as reported in the ED data represent 9 percent of the total number of homeless children and youth enrolled in both SY 2018-19 and SY 2019-20. Again, the decrease between SY 2018-19 and SY 2019-20 should be viewed with some caution given the broad national shift to remote learning during the last quarter of the school year.

### Homeless and Precariously Housed Youth (Voices of Youth Count Estimate, 2016-2017)

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago developed the Voices of Youth Count (VoYC) – a national research initiative designed to address critical gaps in the nation’s knowledge about the scope and scale of youth homelessness, as well as the life circumstances and experiences of runaway, unaccompanied homeless and unstably housed youth between the ages of 13 and 25 years old. In 2017, Chapin Hall released a national estimate of youth experiencing explicit homelessness and couch surfing,<sup>21</sup> based on surveys administered by Gallup, Inc. and follow-up surveys by Chapin Hall in 2016 and 2017. The surveys gathered information from U.S. adults about youth ages 13 to 25.<sup>22</sup> Responses from this survey were used to create national estimates of youth experiences with homelessness and housing instability over the course of a year.

### Voices of Youth Count Sample

A homelessness module was added to Gallup, Inc.’s US Politics and Economics Daily Tracking Survey (DTS) of a nationally representative sample of adults in the U.S. Those who responded that the household had a member aged 13 to 25 at any time in the prior 12 months were asked a series of additional questions about that youth’s experience with homelessness.

Of 68,539 respondents, 26,161 were asked the additional questions about youth.

- 13,560 adults reported on one household member ages 13 to 17;
- 16,975 adults reported on one household member ages 18 to 25;
- 6,295 adults were themselves ages 18 to 25 and gave self-reports; and
- Follow-up interviews were conducted with 150 respondents to validate results and support adjustments to estimates.

The following questions were asked:

For 13 to 17 year olds:

- Did the youth run away from home and stay away for at least one night?
- Did the youth leave home because he or she was asked to leave?

For both age groups, 13 to 17 and 18 to 25:

- Was the youth, homeless for at least one night?<sup>23</sup>
- Did the youth couch surf<sup>24</sup> – that is move from one temporary housing arrangement to another?

Any youth 13 to 17 years of age who was reported to have run away or been asked to leave or who self-reported as homeless in the past year was defined as having experienced “explicit” homelessness, as were any youth 18 to 25 years of age who said they had been homeless. Those in both age groups who only experienced couch surfing in the past year were identified separately. Adjustments were made to ensure 13 to 17-year-olds were not part of a family – that is, not accompanied by a parent or guardian.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The self-report question was: were you homeless for at least one night?

<sup>24</sup> The self-report question was: did you couch surf – that is move from one temporary housing arrangement to another?

<sup>25</sup> The questions in the Gallup poll about youth experiences with homelessness did not identify whether youth were homeless while unaccompanied by a parent or legal guardian. However, the follow-up survey (N=150) identifies the share of youth ages 13 to 17 who were accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, and researchers applied a reduction adjustment to the full sample to estimate unaccompanied youth ages 13 to 17. Youth ages 18 to 25 were assumed to be unaccompanied in the Morton, Dworsky, and Samuels report (2017), and this was not examined further in the follow-up survey.

<sup>21</sup> Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A. and Samuels, G.M. 2017. Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

<sup>22</sup> Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A. Matjasko, J.L., Curry, S.R., Schlueter, D., Chavez, R., and Farrell, A.F. 2018. Prevalence and Correlates of Youth Homelessness in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 62(1): 14-21. ([http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(17\)30503-7/fulltext](http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(17)30503-7/fulltext)).

### EXHIBIT B.10: Estimates of Explicit Homelessness and Couch Surfing Only among Youth in the U.S.

VoYC 2016-2017

| Age Group | Explicit Homelessness | Couch Surfing Only |
|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 13-17     | 0.46 million          | 0.20 million       |
| 18-25     | 1.87 million          | 1.61 million       |

### EXHIBIT B.11: Prevalence Estimates of Explicit Homelessness among Youth in the U.S. by Geography

VoYC 2016-2017

| Age Group | Explicit Homelessness |             | Couch Surfing Only |             |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
|           | % rural               | % non-rural | % rural            | % non-rural |
| 13-17     | 2.8                   | 3.0         | 1.6                | 1.2         |
| 18-25     | 4.7                   | 5.2         | 4.5                | 4.4         |

### EXHIBIT B.12: Characteristics of Youth at Greater Risk of Experiencing Explicit Homelessness Ages 18-25

VOYC 2016-2017

| Characteristic                                 | % higher risk |
|--|---------------|
| Black or African American                      | 83            |
| Hispanic, non-White                            | 33            |
| LGBT   | 120           |
| Reported Annual Household Income of < \$24,000 | 162           |
| Unmarried Parenting Youth                      | 200           |
| Less than a High School Diploma                | 346           |

VoYC found that 460,000 households with youth aged 13 to 17 and 1.87 million 18 to 25 year olds had experienced explicit homelessness at some point in the preceding year.<sup>26</sup> An additional 200,000 households with youth ages 13 to 17 and 1.61 million 18 to 25 year olds had experienced couch surfing only. About half of youth ages 13 to 25 who were either explicitly homeless or couch surfed had those experiences for the first time during the year covered by the survey.

<sup>26</sup> Information on youth ages 13 to 17 was generated through questions asked of adults in the household about any youth in the household. Only household prevalence estimates could be generated for youth ages 13 to 17, rather than population estimates. Both household and population prevalence estimates were generated for youth ages 18 to 25, because, in addition to adult respondents answering questions about those youth, the survey also gathered self-reports of youth ages 18 to 25. The estimates reported here for youth ages 18 to 25 are population estimates.

#### Estimates based on VoYC Data, PIT Count, and HMIS Data

The VoYC estimates differ from the estimates based on PIT count and HMIS data in several ways. The differences that are most important for interpreting the estimates of youth homelessness are noted here. Although these estimates differ, they can and should be used in combination for local planning and policymaking to determine the appropriate array and scale of programs for youth experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

- VoYC defines youth who ran away, left home because of being asked to leave, or had been homeless in the past year as experiencing “explicit” homelessness. The AHAR estimates based on either PIT count or HMIS data define youth as “literally” homeless if, on a given night, they slept either in a shelter program (emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing) or in a place not meant for human habitation.
- VoYC focuses on homeless youth ages 13 to 25, reports on experiences of youth ages 13 to 17 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and assumes youth ages 18 to 25 are unaccompanied. The PIT count and HMIS data define youth as anyone between the ages of 0 and 24 and thus may include some unaccompanied children under the age of 13. PIT estimates of unaccompanied youth do not include 25-year olds. HMIS estimates of people experiencing homelessness as individuals permit identification of people under 18 who do not have an adult with them. HMIS estimates of youth ages 18 to 24 include youth who are part of families, either the only person older than 17 in the family (for example, a parenting youth) or accompanied by other people ages 18 or older.
- VoYC gathers data on youth experiences over the course of a year in a phone-based survey based on third-party reporting or self-reports. HMIS uses administrative records to measure sheltered homelessness over the course of a year based on shelter entry and exit dates. PIT counts are based on both administrative records and in-person surveys.

The prevalence of youth homelessness was similar in rural and non-rural areas. For example, the percentage of households with at least one youth ages 13 to 17 who had experienced explicit homelessness was 2.8 percent in rural areas and 3.0 percent in non-rural areas (see Exhibit B.11). However, the data show couch surfing among youth in rural and less densely populated areas was twice as prevalent as staying in shelter or on the streets compared to youth in medium and large population counties. This may be the result of more limited access to shelters and housing services in their communities.

Youth ages 18 to 25 with particular demographic characteristics were more likely to experience explicit homelessness. African American youth had an 83 percent increased risk of having experienced explicit homelessness compared to youth of other races (see Exhibit B.12). Hispanic youth ages 18 to 25 had a 33 percent higher risk of reporting explicit homelessness than their non-Hispanic counterparts. Youth ages 18 to 25 who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) had a 120 percent higher risk of experiencing explicit homelessness. Unmarried parenting youth ages 18 to 25 had a 200 percent higher risk of reporting explicit homelessness than those who were not parents.<sup>27</sup> Youth who lacked a high school diploma had a 346 percent higher risk of experiencing explicit homelessness than youth who graduated from high school. Youth who reported an annual household income of less than \$24,000 (nearly twice the federal poverty guideline for a one-person household in 2017) had a 162 percent higher risk of reporting explicit homelessness. Nearly one-third of youth experiencing explicit homelessness or couch surfing had experiences with foster care in their past. Nearly half of youth had been in juvenile detention, jail, or prison in their past.

## Survivors of Domestic Violence

### Domestic Violence Survivors Who Use Shelters

Data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) show that each year over 7 million women and men in the U.S. experience physical violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking by an intimate partner that leads to them fearing for their safety or needing services.<sup>28</sup> Of these, approximately 500,000 identify housing services as a need that results from this violence. Emergency shelter, safe haven, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent housing programs within the homeless services system can provide shelter or housing for people in crisis and seeking a safe refuge.

Estimating the number of people fleeing domestic violence who use the homeless services system can be challenging. Residential programs in the homeless service system operated by victim service providers (VSPs) exclusively serving survivors of domestic violence are prohibited from entering client information into HMIS. While VSPs maintain and report data within comparable databases, those data are not included in the HMIS data presented in this report. However, residential programs in the homeless service system operated by non-VSPs exclusively serving survivors

<sup>27</sup> Marital and parenting status were asked at the time of the Gallup poll and were not directly tied to the time during which the 18 to 25 year-old was experiencing explicit homelessness, which means that the child may or may not have been in the custody of that youth parent at that time.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>. The survey was conducted in 2012, and results were reported in 2017.

## EXHIBIT B.13: Domestic Violence Beds by Program Type, Household Type and CoC Type

HIC 2020

| Type                              | DV Beds       | Total Beds     | % DV beds   | # of CoCs  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>61,386</b> | <b>948,045</b> | <b>6.5</b>  | <b>385</b> |
| <b>Total Beds – ES, SH, TH</b>    | <b>49,333</b> | <b>397,909</b> | <b>12.4</b> | <b>385</b> |
| <b>Beds by Family Type</b>        |               |                |             |            |
| Individuals                       | 9,753         | 205,263        | 4.8         | 385        |
| Families                          | 39,472        | 189,573        | 20.8        | 385        |
| <b>Beds by CoC Type</b>           |               |                |             |            |
| Major Cities                      | 13,710        | 200,509        | 6.8         | 48         |
| Other Urban CoCs                  | 3,820         | 28,117         | 13.6        | 59         |
| Suburban CoCs                     | 11,522        | 92,909         | 12.4        | 166        |
| Rural CoCs                        | 19,975        | 73,129         | 27.3        | 107        |
| <b>Total Beds – RRH, PSH, OPH</b> | <b>12,053</b> | <b>550,136</b> | <b>2.2</b>  | <b>383</b> |
| <b>Beds by Family Type</b>        |               |                |             |            |
| Individuals                       | 1,565         | 304,054        | 0.5         | 383        |
| Families                          | 10,488        | 245,820        | 4.3         | 383        |
| <b>Beds by CoC Type</b>           |               |                |             |            |
| Major Cities                      | 4,832         | 267,221        | 1.8         | 48         |
| Other Urban CoCs                  | 794           | 44,235         | 1.8         | 59         |
| Suburban CoCs                     | 2,859         | 154,069        | 1.9         | 165        |
| Rural CoCs                        | 3,367         | 76,843         | 4.4         | 106        |

Note 1: Total beds include year-round beds from emergency shelter (ES), safe haven (SH), and transitional housing (TH), separately from rapid re-housing (RRH), permanent supportive housing (PSH), and other permanent housing (OPH) projects. Beds funded under HUD's Rapid Re-housing Demonstration (DEM) program are included with RRH.

Note 2: The total beds and beds by household type include Puerto Rico and U.S. Territories. Bed counts by CoC Type do not include Puerto Rico and U.S. Territories, excluding five CoCs (PR (2 CoCs), GU, MP, VI).

Note 3: Of the 385 CoCs with any ES, SH, or TH beds, 368 CoCs had any DV bed of those types; 17 CoCs did not have bed inventories of those types targeted to survivors of domestic violence. Of the 383 CoCs with any RRH, PSH, or OPH beds, 167 CoCs had any DV beds of those types; 216 CoCs did not have bed inventories of those types targeted to survivors of domestic violence.

Note 4: DV beds for households with only children are not included in the breakdown by family type. As such, the sum of DV beds by family type does not equal the total number of DV beds.

of domestic violence are required to enter client information into HMIS. Not having data from VSPs in the same way we have data from non-VSPs results in a challenge to fully quantify the needs and services for survivors of domestic violence and presents a limited understanding of the extent of survivors among the homeless population. Programs serving a broader homeless population report information

to their communities' HMIS on all their clients, some of whom may be survivors of domestic violence. The extent of housing instability and homelessness for this population can only be partly understood by examining the capacity of residential programs operated by VSPs to serve them.

In the Point-in-Time (PIT) count, the data source used to report on people in residential programs operated by victim service providers, collecting data on survivors of domestic violence is optional. HUD has made the collection of a person's domestic violence status optional because of the sensitive nature of this question and the reality that many people interviewing people experiencing homelessness on the night of the count are volunteers who are not adequately trained on how to ask this kind of information in a trauma-informed way. Communities that collect information from those programs do not do so systematically, so it is not possible to use the PIT counts to estimate the percentage of people experiencing homelessness who are domestic violence survivors.<sup>29</sup>

The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data can provide an estimate of the extent to which the homeless services system explicitly targets residential services to domestic violence survivors. The HIC contains information on all the projects and beds in the homeless services system, including beds provided by VSPs. While the HIC provides a count of the beds, it cannot identify the number of unique people who were served in those beds over the course of a year, so this information is similar to a PIT count, with the caveat that the beds might not all be occupied at any particular point in time. In addition, survivors of domestic violence may use beds intended for a broader homeless population, so the HIC still offers only a limited sense of the extent to which this population uses the homeless services system.

Exhibit B.13 displays the number of beds available year-round<sup>30</sup> as reported in the 2020 HIC for all projects in the homeless services system that have identified domestic violence survivors as the target population. Exhibit B.13 also shows these beds by the type of program, distinguishing beds for people currently experiencing homelessness (emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing programs) from beds in permanent housing programs (rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing).

Based on the bed counts in the 2020 HIC, 12 percent of the emergency shelter, safe

haven, and transitional housing beds available year-round for people currently experiencing homelessness were targeted to survivors of domestic violence (DV). A smaller share, six percent, of all the beds available year-round in the homeless services system (including beds in rapid re-housing and permanent housing programs) were targeted to domestic violence survivors. Approximately 20 percent of all DV beds were in rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, or other permanent housing programs.

Exhibits B.13 shows the number and share of beds targeted to survivors of domestic violence by household type and the geography type of the CoC. CoCs are divided into four geographic categories: major city CoCs (N=48); other largely urban CoCs (N=59); largely suburban CoCs (N=173); and largely rural CoCs (N=113). In 2020, the share of year-round beds for people currently experiencing homelessness targeted to survivors of domestic violence was seven percent in major city CoCs, 14 percent in other largely urban CoCs, and 13 percent in largely suburban CoCs. The share in largely rural CoCs was much larger, 27 percent.

<sup>29</sup> Using the optional PIT count of victims of domestic violence within the homeless population produces a total of 44,422 people, 73 percent of whom were located in sheltered locations (emergency shelters, safe havens, and transitional housing) and the remaining 27 percent in unsheltered locations.

<sup>30</sup> The HIC contains information on seasonal and overflow beds; however, only year-round beds are considered for this analysis. The beds reported must have been already in operation, or under development at the time of the HIC and scheduled to open with the year.





# 2019-2020 Estimates of Homelessness

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# Estimates of Homelessness

## IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2019 AND 2020

### Estimates of Homelessness in the United States

Almost **1.3 million people** accessed an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some point between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020. The estimated number is 1,253,049.

In March 2020, about halfway through the 2020 reporting year, the United States declared a state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the highly contagious nature of the virus and the lack of vaccines at the time, the pandemic 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 increased physical distance by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some communities, this reduced capacity was reported in HMIS, but in others it was not. In addition, common places where people experiencing homelessness can connect with services providers, including libraries, town halls, and public parks were also closed during much of this period. Estimates of the number of people experiencing sheltered homelessness during the 2020 reporting year should be viewed with extreme caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities, as well as people's reluctance to enter or remain in shelters.

- Nearly two-thirds (66%) of all people accessing shelters in 2020 were in adult-only households, one-third (33%) were in households with children, and one percent were in child-only households.
- One of every 265 people in the U.S. experienced sheltered homelessness at some point during 2020.
- People staying in shelters were just over three percent of all people with incomes below the poverty line and six percent of households in poverty.

### Changes between 2019 and 2020

The reporting period for 2019 is October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. An estimated 1,456,199 people who were able to access an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing bed at some point during that year. Given the change to a new platform known as the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), 2019 has now become the baseline for reporting year-to-year change. The text box at the end of this section compares the estimates for 2018, 2019, and 2020 using the 2018 reporting universe. The data reported in this chapter are based on the reporting universe adopted in 2019.

The number of people accessing shelters dropped by 14 percent between 2019 and 2020 (or 203,150 fewer people). The COVID-19 pandemic makes it difficult to interpret that drop and,

“[Our decline was] caused by the pandemic as several of our ES projects had to reduce capacity and change their processes. We also saw decreased utilization among projects that were still open as people did not appear comfortable going into shelter programs.”  
 –Major City CoC in the South

**EXHIBIT 1.1: One-Year Estimates of Sheltered Homelessness 2019-2020**

|   | 2019      |            | 2020      |            |
|---|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|   | #         | % (of all) | #         | % (of all) |
| Number of Households                        | 1,102,272 | 100%       | 959,948   | 100%       |
| Number of People                            | 1,456,199 | 100%       | 1,253,049 | 100%       |
| <b>People by Household Type<sup>a</sup></b> |           |            |           |            |
| People in Adult-Only Households             | 935,763   | 64.3%      | 824,499   | 65.8%      |
| People in Families with Children            | 507,224   | 34.8%      | 416,907   | 33.3%      |
| People in Child-Only Households             | 22,251    | 1.5%       | 14,060    | 1.1%       |

<sup>a</sup> Because people have multiple stays in shelter over the course of a year and stay in different household configurations, a single person can be counted in more than one household type. Because of this overlap, the sum of the number of people by household type is greater than the unique count of people, and the percentages sum over 100.

**EXHIBIT 1.2: Changes in Estimates of Homelessness, Households in Poverty, and U.S. Households**

| Population                    | Change in People, 2019-2020 |        | Change in Households, 2019-2020 |        |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|
|                               | #                           | %      | #                               | %      |
| Staying in Sheltered Programs | -203,150                    | -14.0% | -142,324                        | -12.9% |
| Living in Poverty             | -1,042,533                  | -2.6%  | -163,003                        | -1.0%  |
| In U.S. Population            | 1,265,292                   | 0.4%   | 1,525,584                       | 1.2%   |

## ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2019 AND 2020

again, should be viewed with caution. In addition to reduced shelter capacity and safety concerns that may have kept people out of shelter, homelessness prevention efforts such as those funded through the CARES Act, together with eviction moratoria, may have affected the number of people staying in shelter during the last six months of the 2020 reporting year.

By comparison, the U.S. population increased by about one percent while people with incomes below the poverty line decreased by three percent. Because of the data collection timeframe, Census data for 2020 likely do not capture the full economic impacts of the pandemic.

### System Engagement of Sheltered Households

Data collected through the LSA provides information on whether households experiencing homelessness are doing so for the first time, are continuously engaged in the homeless system from the prior year, or have returned to homelessness after exiting to a permanent, temporary, or unknown situation. The system engagement data reflect both a reduced inflow into homelessness during the pandemic, either coming into the shelter system for the first time or returning to the system after an exit. At the same time, more people were continuously engaged by the homeless services system, reflecting an apparent increased difficulty in leaving the homeless system.

- In 2020, 59 percent of all sheltered households were homeless for the first time.
- Nearly one-quarter (23%) of households were continuously engaged in the homeless system, meaning that they were also homeless on the day prior to the start of the 2020 reporting period.
- Eighteen percent of sheltered households had returned to homelessness during the 2020 reporting year. Of those, seven percent had exited to a temporary destination such as doubling up with friends or family on a temporary basis or another temporary, non-homeless situation. Four percent returned after having exited to a permanent destination such as their own rental unit. Eight percent returned after exiting to an unknown destination.

### Changes in System Engagement

- Both the number and the share of sheltered households who experienced sheltered homelessness for the first time declined between 2019 and 2020. In 2019, nearly two-thirds (65%) of households used shelter programs for the first time compared with 59 percent in 2020.
- The overall number of households that returned to homelessness declined by four percent between 2019 and 2020. This was driven by a 16 percent drop in the number of sheltered households returning to homelessness after having exited to a permanent destination. In contrast, those returning after exiting homelessness to a temporary situation increased by five percent.
- Sheltered households that remained engaged in the homeless system from the prior year increased by six percent between 2019 and 2020.

**EXHIBIT 1.3: Type of Engagement in the Homeless System 2019-2020**

| Place Stayed                            | 2019      |        | 2020    |        | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|---|-----------|--------|---------|--------|------------------|--------|
|   | #         | %      | #       | %      | #                | %      |
| All Sheltered Households                | 1,102,272 | 100.0% | 959,948 | 100.0% | -142,324         | -12.9% |
| First-time Homeless                     | 714,857   | 64.9%  | 565,699 | 58.9%  | -149,158         | -20.9% |
| Continuously Engaged                    | 210,698   | 19.1%  | 224,214 | 23.4%  | 13,516           | 6.4%   |
| Returned to homelessness within 2 years | 176,717   | 16.0%  | 170,035 | 17.7%  | -6,682           | -3.8%  |
| After Exiting to Temporary Destination  | 58,845    | 5.3%   | 61,947  | 6.5%   | 3,102            | 5.3%   |
| After Exiting to Permanent Destination  | 39,401    | 3.6%   | 33,248  | 3.5%   | -6,153           | -15.6% |
| After Exiting to Unknown Destination    | 78,471    | 7.1%   | 74,840  | 7.8%   | -3,631           | -4.6%  |

## ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2019 AND 2020

### Characteristics of All People Experiencing Homelessness in 2019 and 2020

- Nearly twice as many men as women were heads of households experiencing homelessness in 2020. This reflects a preponderance of men among people experiencing homelessness without children. In 2020, 62 percent of heads of households were men, and only 38 percent were women. Among households living in poverty, the reverse is true. Almost two-thirds of heads of households living in poverty in 2020 were women, and 38 percent were men. In the entire U.S. population, heads of households are about equally split between men and women.
- Transgender people made up 0.4 percent of heads of households using shelters, and 0.1 percent of heads of households identified as gender non-conforming.
- Children under 18 are the largest age group among the sheltered homeless population, 21 percent of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness in 2020, similar to the percentage of children in the entire U.S. population, 22 percent. However, sheltered children were underrepresented compared to children in poverty (21% vs. 29%).
- The next largest group of people using shelters is between the ages of 25 and 34. This group makes up 19 percent of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness. This is larger than the 14 percent of the U.S. population in this age group and the 13 percent of people in the U.S. poverty population.
- The share of the sheltered population that was elderly (65 or older) was only four percent in 2020, compared with 17 percent of the U.S. population and 14 percent of people with incomes below the poverty line. Eighteen percent of the homeless population was elderly or nearly elderly (55+) in 2020, also underrepresented compared with 30 percent of the entire U.S. population and 25 percent of people living in poverty.
- Heads of sheltered households who identified as Hispanic or Latino/a/x of any race comprised 16 percent of the total homeless population, just slightly higher than their share of all U.S. heads of households (14%) and lower than their share of the U.S. poverty population (19%).
- People identifying as Black or African American remained considerably overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness in 2020. Black people accounted for 40 percent of heads of sheltered households. In contrast, Black people made up only 12 percent of all U.S. heads of households and 21 percent of heads of households living in poverty.
- White heads of households not identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x were 40 percent of all heads of households using shelters. This is smaller than their share of household heads in the entire U.S. population, 65 percent, and their share of heads of households living in poverty, 50 percent.
- A small percentage of heads of households in shelter identified as another race (5%) or multiracial (4%).
- The percent of sheltered heads of households that identified as Native American, American Indian, or Alaska Native was more than triple that of the U.S. population (3.3% vs. 0.8%), and more than double the percent of indigenous heads of households in poverty (1.5%).

**EXHIBIT 1.4: Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless People, U.S. Poverty Population, and Total U.S. Population**  
2019-2020

|  | 2019             |                                   |                 | 2020             |                                   |                 |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
|  | Sheltered People | U.S. Population Living in Poverty | U.S. Population | Sheltered People | U.S. Population Living in Poverty | U.S. Population |
| <b>Gender of Heads of Households</b>             |                  |                                   |                 |                  |                                   |                 |
| Female   | 38.9%            | 61.7%                             | 49.2%           | 37.7%            | 61.6%                             | 50.8%           |
| Male   | 60.7%            | 38.3%                             | 50.8%           | 61.8%            | 38.4%                             | 49.2%           |
| Transgender                                      | 0.3%             |                                   |                 | 0.4%             |                                   |                 |
| Gender Non-conforming                            | 0.1%             |                                   |                 | 0.1%             |                                   |                 |
| <b>Age of All People in the Household</b>        |                  |                                   |                 |                  |                                   |                 |
| Under age 18                                     | 22.7%            | 30.2%                             | 22.2%           | 21.3%            | 29.3%                             | 22.0%           |
| 18-24  | 9.7%             | 13.3%                             | 9.3%            | 9.3%             | 12.3%                             | 9.1%            |
| 25-34  | 18.8%            | 13.2%                             | 13.9%           | 18.9%            | 13.1%                             | 13.9%           |
| 35-44  | 16.5%            | 10.7%                             | 12.8%           | 17.2%            | 11.0%                             | 12.9%           |
| 45-54  | 15.6%            | 9.1%                              | 12.4%           | 15.5%            | 9.3%                              | 12.2%           |
| 55-64  | 12.9%            | 10.9%                             | 12.9%           | 13.7%            | 11.5%                             | 12.9%           |
| 65 and older                                     | 3.6%             | 12.7%                             | 16.5%           | 4.2%             | 13.6%                             | 16.9%           |
| <b>Ethnicity of Heads of Households</b>          |                  |                                   |                 |                  |                                   |                 |
| Hispanic/Latino                                  | 15.8%            | 19.1%                             | 13.6%           | 16.2%            | 18.7%                             | 13.7%           |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                          | 84.2%            | 80.9%                             | 86.4%           | 83.8%            | 81.3%                             | 86.3%           |
| <b>Race of Heads of Households</b>               |                  |                                   |                 |                  |                                   |                 |
| Asian or Asian American                          | 0.7%             | 4.4%                              | 4.9%            | 0.8%             | 4.5%                              | 5.0%            |
| Black or African American                        | 40.5%            | 22.4%                             | 13.1%           | 40.0%            | 21.4%                             | 12.3%           |
| Multiple Races                                   | 3.5%             | 2.8%                              | 2.3%            | 3.8%             | 10.5%                             | 8.6%            |
| Native American/American Indian or Alaska Native | 3.0%             | 1.5%                              | 0.8%            | 3.3%             | 1.5%                              | 0.8%            |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander              | 0.9%             | 0.2%                              | 0.1%            | 0.9%             | 0.2%                              | 0.1%            |
| White, Hispanic/Latino                           | 10.8%            | 12.2%                             | 9.1%            | 10.7%            | 4.2%                              | 3.2%            |
| White, non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                   | 40.6%            | 51.0%                             | 66.0%           | 40.4%            | 50.3%                             | 65.0%           |

Note: Data on characteristics exclude people for whom the characteristic is missing or unknown.

## ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2019 AND 2020

### Changes in Characteristics of the Sheltered Population

The characteristics of the sheltered homeless population changed little between 2019 and 2020.

- Compared to 2019, the sheltered population in 2020 was slightly more male and slightly older. Sixty-two percent of people staying in shelter programs in 2020 were male compared to 61 percent in 2019.
- People under the age of 18 accounted for 23 percent of the sheltered population in 2019 and 21 percent in 2020. There were similar shifts in the elderly and near elderly population, with people 55 and older accounting for 17 percent of the sheltered population in 2019 and 18 percent in 2020.
- The race and ethnicity of the sheltered population remained unchanged between 2019 and 2020.

### Geographic Distribution of Sheltered Households

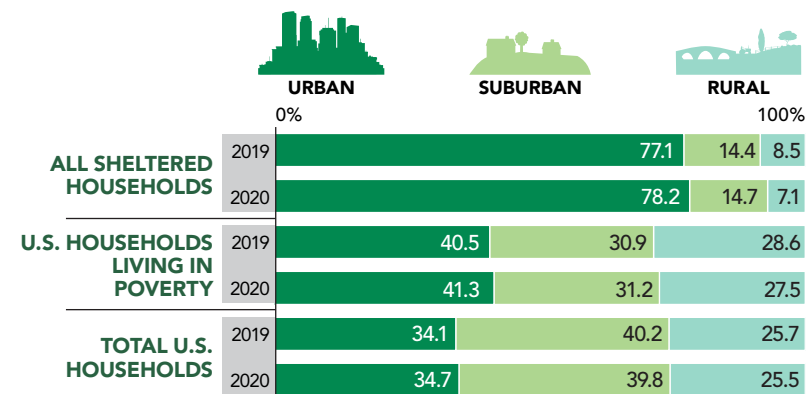
- In 2020, more than three-fourths of households using shelters (78%) did so in urban areas. This is more than double the percentage of U.S. households living in urban areas and nearly double the percentage of households in poverty living in urban areas. The overrepresentation of the sheltered homeless population in urban areas is likely related to several factors, including limited affordable housing options in urban areas and the density of homeless services in those areas.
- While 40 percent of households in the United States lived in a suburban community in 2020, 15 percent of people using shelters did so.
- Only seven percent of households using shelters did so in rural areas, while 26 percent of all U.S. households and 28 percent of households living in poverty were in rural areas.

### Changes in Geographic Distribution of Sheltered Households

Between 2019 and 2020, the distribution of households experiencing sheltered homelessness shifted slightly, away from rural areas and toward urban and suburban areas.

- In 2019, nine percent of all sheltered households were in rural areas, dropping to seven percent in 2020.
- The share of households using shelters that did so in urban areas increased from 77 percent to 78 percent between 2019 and 2020, and the share of suburban households increased from 14 to 15 percent. This may reflect the differing impacts of COVID-19 on urban/suburban and rural areas during the six months of the 2020 reporting period that occurred during the pandemic.

**EXHIBIT 1.5: Geographic Location of Sheltered Households by Household Type**  
2019-2020



“The [decline in people served] reflects the impacts of COVID-19 on the shelter system. Shelter-in-place policies, testing protocols, creating space for distancing, and an eviction moratorium paired with state aid for eviction prevention have all contributed to fewer people utilizing the shelter system. Many shelters reduced their capacity to half of what they had pre-pandemic to allow people to maintain a safe distance. At the same time, additional, temporary shelter space was created to accommodate a need for shelter. An eviction moratorium and state aid for eviction prevention helped to keep people housed and out of the shelter system. This was implemented in March 2020.”  
—Urban CoC in the Midwest

## ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2019 AND 2020

## Additional Characteristics of Heads of Households and Other Adults

- In 2020, one in every five adults staying in shelter programs across the U.S. had a chronic pattern of homelessness. Similar shares of adults in urban and suburban areas had chronic patterns of homelessness, while 15 percent of adults in rural areas were chronically homeless.
- Nine percent of all adults staying in shelters were veterans. The percentage of adults in urban and suburban areas reflected the national percentage, while the percentage of veterans in rural areas was slightly smaller (8%).
- In 2020, one in five adults staying in shelters was a survivor of domestic violence, and seven percent were currently fleeing unsafe situations. It is important to note that this data represents survivors of domestic violence that accessed homeless services that were not operated by victim service providers and should not be considered the full estimate of survivorship among people experiencing sheltered homelessness. Given the way data are reported, it is not possible to show the percentage of adults in each geographic category who are survivors of domestic violence. However, data are available on the share of people *currently fleeing* domestic violence by geography. In 2020, rural areas accounted for the highest share of people in shelters who were currently fleeing unsafe situations (8%), while seven percent of all adults in shelter programs in urban areas, and five percent of heads of households or other adults in suburban areas were currently fleeing unsafe situations.

## Changes in Additional Characteristics of Adults

Overall, heads of households and other adults in shelters had higher rates of chronic homelessness, disability, and surviving domestic violence in 2020 than in 2019. As the numbers of people staying in shelter dropped during the pandemic, those who used shelter programs were more vulnerable.

- In 2020, 20 percent of adults had chronic patterns of homelessness compared with 16 percent in 2019. The number of chronically homeless adults increased by six percent, while the entire population staying in shelter declined by 14 percent.
- The share of adults with a disability also increased between 2019 and 2020, from 47 percent to 50 percent. The number of adults with a disability staying in shelters dropped but at a much smaller rate than all people (by 7% compared to 14% for all people).
- The share of adults who were survivors of domestic violence increased from 19 to 20 percent, and this reflects an increase in the share of adults currently fleeing domestic violence. In each geographic category, the percentage of adults currently fleeing domestic violence increased.
- Veterans accounted for nine percent of all adults in both 2019 and 2020 and declined by 16 percent during that time period.

## EXHIBIT 1.6: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless People

2019-2020

|  | 2019      |       | 2020    |       | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|--|-----------|-------|---------|-------|------------------|--------|
|  | #         | %     | #       | %     | #                | %      |
| <b>Chronic Homeless Status of Heads of Households and Adults</b> |           |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Chronically Homeless   | 184,066   | 16.1% | 195,312 | 19.5% | 11,246           | 6.1%   |
| Not Chronically Homeless or Chronic Status Unknown               | 962,673   | 83.9% | 804,151 | 80.5% | -158,522         | -16.5% |
| <b>Veteran Status</b>  |           |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Veteran  | 100,082   | 8.9%  | 84,308  | 8.6%  | -15,774          | -15.8% |
| Non-Veteran  | 1,011,295 | 90.2% | 881,288 | 89.9% | -130,007         | -12.9% |
| Veteran Status Unknown   | 10,236    | 0.9%  | 14,419  | 1.5%  | 4,183            | 40.9%  |
| <b>Survivors of Domestic Violence</b>                            |           |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Total DV Survivors   | 214,740   | 18.7% | 203,448 | 20.4% | -11,292          | -5.3%  |
| DV Survivors Currently Fleeing                                   | 68,159    | 5.9%  | 67,583  | 6.8%  | -576             | -0.8%  |
| DV Survivors Not Currently Fleeing                               | 132,533   | 11.6% | 124,059 | 12.4% | -8,474           | -6.4%  |
| DV Survivors with Unknown Fleeing Status                         | 14,047    | 1.2%  | 11,806  | 1.2%  | -2,241           | -16.0% |
| Not DV Survivors   | 830,920   | 72.5% | 723,283 | 72.4% | -107,637         | -13.0% |
| Unknown DV Status  | 101,080   | 8.8%  | 72,732  | 7.3%  | -28,348          | -28.0% |
| <b>Disability Status</b>   |           |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Disabled   | 536,994   | 46.8% | 499,492 | 50.0% | -37,502          | -7.0%  |
| Not Disabled   | 587,607   | 51.2% | 474,875 | 47.5% | -112,732         | -19.2% |
| Disability Status Unknown  | 22,139    | 1.9%  | 25,096  | 2.5%  | 2,957            | 13.4%  |

Note: These estimates take advantage of the system-use analysis supported by HMIS data and use a three-year period to determine if a person's homelessness is chronic.

## EXHIBIT 1.7: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Households by Geography

2019-2020

| Characteristic of Households        | Urban Households |       | Suburban Households |       | Rural Households |       |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                                     | 2019             | 2020  | 2019                | 2020  | 2019             | 2020  |
| Chronically Homeless Adult          | 19.7%            | 20.3% | 18.4%               | 20.8% | 11.5%            | 14.6% |
| Veterans                            | 10.6%            | 8.8%  | 11.7%               | 9.0%  | 8.1%             | 8.1%  |
| Currently Fleeing Domestic Violence | 6.3%             | 7.3%  | 4.9%                | 5.2%  | 6.6%             | 7.5%  |

## ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2019 AND 2020

### Comparison to 2018 Estimates of Sheltered Homeless People

The estimated number of people experiencing homelessness in 2018 cannot be compared to the estimates of people in 2019 and 2020 included in this chapter because of a slightly different reporting universe. The 2018 estimates are slightly broader and include some people who were actively engaged in the homeless services system but did not have a bed night in one of the programs. See About this Report for more information. For comparability, the table below re-creates the 2019 and 2020 estimates using the 2018 reporting universe.

Overall, estimates of homelessness using the 2018 universe increased slightly between 2018 and 2019, while falling between 2018 and 2020.

#### EXHIBIT 1.8: 2019 and 2020 Estimates Using 2018 Reporting Universe

|  | 2018      | 2019      | 2020      | Number Change<br>2018-2019 | Percent Change<br>2018-2019 | Number Change<br>2018-2020 | Percent Change<br>2018-2020 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of Sheltered Households           | 1,100,765 | 1,106,126 | 963,381   | 5,361                      | 0.5%                        | -137,384                   | -12.5%                      |
| Number of People in Sheltered Households | 1,446,159 | 1,461,754 | 1,257,598 | 15,595                     | 1.1%                        | -188,561                   | -13.0%                      |

Note: Data in Exhibit 1.8 are based on all people active in the homeless assistance system, and not limited to those with at least one bed night in the homeless assistance system.



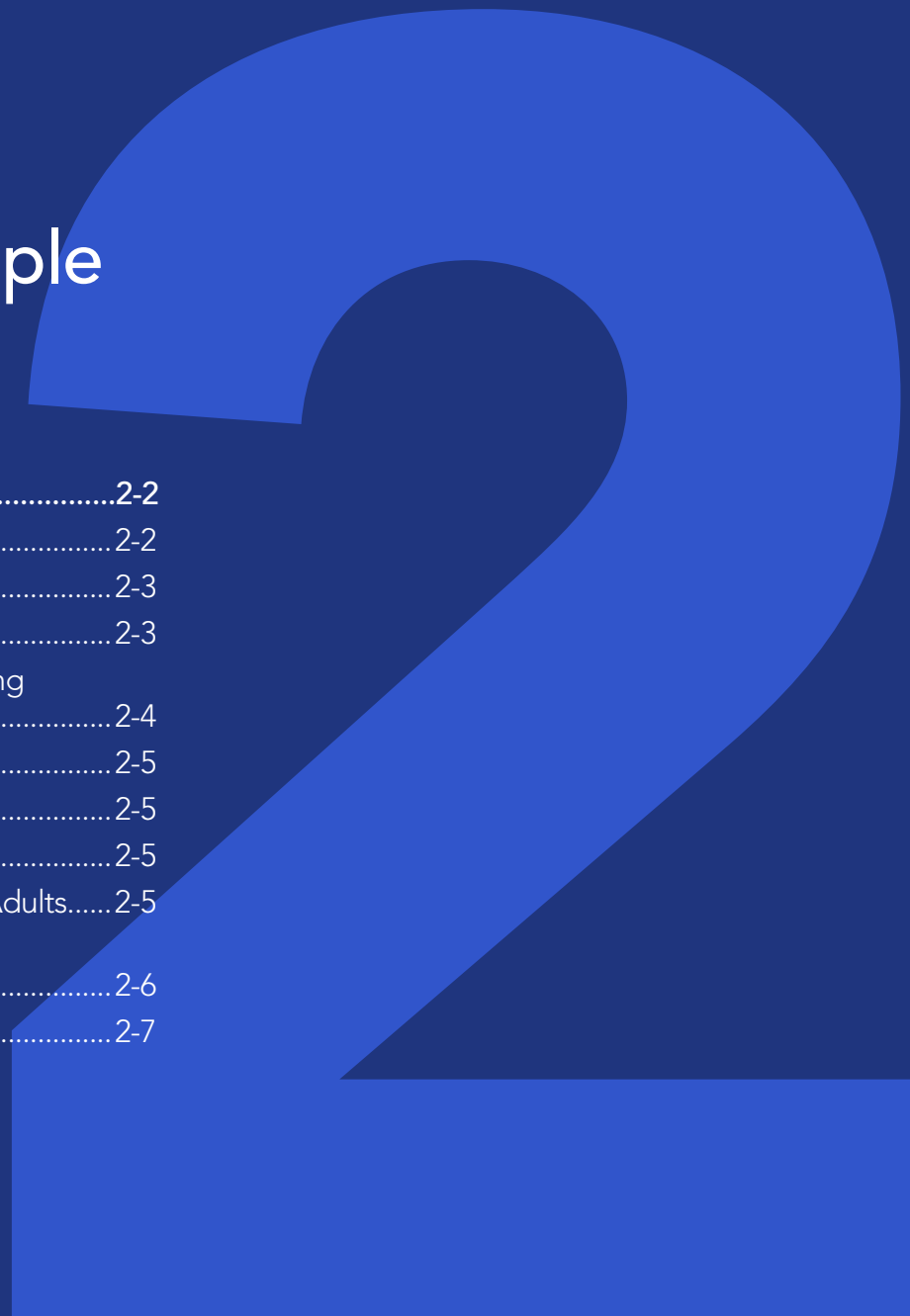




**2019-2020**

# Estimates of Sheltered People in Adult-Only Households

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# Estimates of Sheltered People IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS

“Due to the pandemic, folks have been ‘sheltering in place’ [in our non-congregate shelters], thus [we’ve seen] longer than usual lengths of stay.”  
—Suburban CoC in the West

## Estimates of Homelessness in the United States

An estimated 824,499 people in households without a child present (adult-only households) accessed an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some point between October 1, 2019, and September 30, 2020.

In March 2020, about halfway through the 2020 reporting year, the United States declared a state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the highly contagious nature of the virus and the lack of vaccines at the time, the pandemic 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 increased physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some communities, this reduced capacity was reported in HMIS, but in others it was not. In addition, common places where people experiencing homelessness can connect with services providers, including libraries, town halls, and public parks were also closed during much of this period. Estimates of the number of people in adult-only households experiencing sheltered homelessness during the 2020 reporting year should be viewed with extreme caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities, as well as people’s reluctance to enter or remain in shelters.

- One of every 210 people in adult-only households in the U.S. experienced sheltered homelessness at some point during 2020.
- People in sheltered adult-only households were five percent of people in adult-only households in poverty in the U.S.

### Changes between 2019 and 2020

The reporting year for 2019 is October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. An estimated 935,763 people were able to access an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some point during that year. Given the change to a new platform known as the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), 2019 has now become the baseline for reporting year-to-year change. The text box at the end of this section compares the estimates for 2018, 2019, and 2020 using the 2018 reporting universe. The data reported in this chapter are based on the reporting universe adopted in 2019.

The number of people in adult-only households accessing shelters dropped by nearly 12 percent between 2019 and 2020 (or 111,264 fewer people). The COVID-19 pandemic makes it difficult to interpret that drop because of reduced capacity and safety concerns that may have kept people out of shelter. Again, these declines should be viewed with extreme caution. During the same time period, the number of people in adult-only households living in poverty increased by one percent.

**EXHIBIT 2.1: One-Year Estimates of Sheltered Adult-Only Homelessness**  
2019-2020

|                                 | 2019    | 2020    | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|------------------|--------|
|                                 |         |         | #                | %      |
| Adult-Only Households           | 922,735 | 814,095 | -108,640         | -11.8% |
| People in Adult-Only Households | 935,763 | 824,499 | -111,264         | -11.9% |

**EXHIBIT 2.2: Change in Sheltered Adult-Only Households**  
2019-2020

| Characteristic              | Change in People |        | Change in Households |        |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|
|                             | #                | %      | #                    | %      |
| Staying in Shelter Programs | -111,264         | -11.9% | -108,640             | -11.8% |
| Living in Poverty           | 114,254          | 0.6%   | 329,189              | 3.1%   |
| In U.S. Population          | 1,512,297        | 0.9%   | 1,959,258            | 2.1%   |

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS

### System Engagement of Adult-Only Households

Data collected through the LSA provides information on whether households experiencing homelessness are doing so for the first time, are continuously engaged in the homeless system from the prior year, or have returned to homelessness after exiting to a permanent, temporary, or unknown situation. The system engagement data reflect both a reduced inflow into homelessness during the pandemic, either coming into the shelter system for the first time or returning to the system after an exit. At the same time, more people were continuously engaged by the homeless services system, reflecting an apparent increased difficulty in leaving the homeless system.

- In 2020, nearly six of every ten adult-only households (59%) were homeless for the first time, slightly higher than the share of families experiencing homelessness for the first time (56%).
- More than one of every five (22%) adult-only households were continuously engaged, meaning that they were also homeless on the day prior to the start of the 2020 reporting period.
- Nearly 20 percent of adult-only households returned to homelessness within two years of exiting homelessness. Of those, seven percent had previously exited to a temporary destination such as doubling up with friends or family on a temporary basis or other temporary, non-homeless situations. Three percent returned after having exited to a permanent destination, such as their own rental unit. Nine percent returned after exiting to an unknown destination.

### Changes in System Engagement

- The number and the share of adult-only households who used shelter programs for the first time declined between 2019 and 2020. In 2019, nearly two-thirds (65%) of adult-only households experienced sheltered homelessness for the first time compared with 59 percent in 2020.
- The number of adult-only households that returned to homelessness did not change very much between 2019 and 2020. However, those returning after exiting homelessness to a permanent situation dropped by 15 percent while those returning after exiting to a temporary situation increased by seven percent.
- Adult-only households that remained engaged in the homeless system from the prior year increased by six percent between 2019 and 2020.

**EXHIBIT 2.3: Type of Engagement in the Homeless System 2019-2020**

|   | 2019    |        | 2020    |        | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|---|---------|--------|---------|--------|------------------|--------|
|   | #       | %      | #       | %      | #                | %      |
| All Adult-only Households               | 922,735 | 100.0% | 814,095 | 100.0% | -108,640         | -11.8% |
| First-time Homeless                     | 598,229 | 64.8%  | 480,715 | 59.0%  | -117,514         | -19.6% |
| Continuously Engaged                    | 166,578 | 18.1%  | 176,708 | 21.7%  | 10,130           | 6.1%   |
| Returned to Homelessness Within 2 Years | 157,928 | 17.1%  | 156,671 | 19.2%  | -1,257           | -0.8%  |
| After Exiting to Temporary Destination  | 55,001  | 6.0%   | 58,787  | 7.2%   | 3,786            | 6.9%   |
| After Exiting to Permanent Destination  | 32,212  | 3.5%   | 27,523  | 3.4%   | -4,689           | -14.6% |
| After Exiting to Unknown Destination    | 70,715  | 7.7%   | 70,361  | 8.6%   | -354             | -0.5%  |

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS

### Characteristics of People in Adult-Only Households Experiencing Homelessness in 2019 and 2020

- Most heads of adult-only households are men. Seven of every 10 heads of households without children identified as men, 29 percent as women, and one percent was either transgender or gender non-conforming. By comparison, women were a majority of heads of adult-only households living in poverty (58%) and half of all heads of adult-only households in the country (50%).
- One of every three people in adult-only households using shelters was under the age of 35, only slightly greater than the shares of people in adult-only households in poverty (30%) and in the U.S. population (27%). Ten percent of people in adult-only households in shelter were youth—that is, under the age of 25. This is smaller than the share of the poverty population in this age group of people in adult-only households, 17 percent, but about the same as the share of the total U.S. population (12%).
- Elderly people (65 or older) in adult-only households were a much smaller share of people in adult-only households staying in shelters, six percent, than the share of all people in adult-only households that are elderly (30%) or the share of people in adult-only households living in poverty that are elderly (27%).
- People identifying as Black or African American are considerably overrepresented among sheltered adult-only households. Black people accounted for 38 percent of heads of sheltered adult-only households in 2020 while making up only 21 percent of heads of adult-only households living in poverty and 12 percent of all U.S. heads of adult-only households.
- Among heads of adult-only households, the share that used shelters in 2020 identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x was about the same as the Hispanic share of the poverty population of adult-only households (15% vs. 14%) and somewhat greater than the share of the U.S. population, 11 percent. This differs from the sheltered family population, in which families identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x are underrepresented among families using shelters (see Chapter 3).
- Adult-only households identifying as White, non-Hispanic or Latino/a/x make up 43 percent of the adult-only population using shelters. This is a smaller share of adult-only households using shelters than the share of all U.S. adult-only households who are White, non-Hispanic or Latino/a/x, 68 percent, or the share of adult-only households living in poverty who are White, non-Hispanic or Latino/a/x, 56 percent.
- Native American heads of adult-only households using shelter programs were considerably overrepresented compared to their share of all U.S. households (4% vs 1%) and adult-only households in poverty (2%).
- While Asian or Asian Americans accounted for five percent of both all heads of adult-only households in the U.S. and households in poverty, they were less than one percent of sheltered adult-only households.

**EXHIBIT 2.4: Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless People in Adult-Only Households, U.S. Poverty Population, and Total U.S. Population<sup>a</sup>**  
2019-2020

|  | 2019             |                                   |                 | 2020             |                                   |                 |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
|  | Sheltered People | U.S. Population Living in Poverty | U.S. Population | Sheltered People | U.S. Population Living in Poverty | U.S. Population |
| <b>Gender of Heads of Households<sup>b</sup></b> |                  |                                   |                 |                  |                                   |                 |
| Female   | 30.5%            | 56.1%                             | 47.6%           | 29.4%            | 57.5%                             | 49.7%           |
| Male   | 69.1%            | 43.9%                             | 52.4%           | 70.0%            | 42.5%                             | 50.3%           |
| Transgender                                      | 0.4%             |                                   |                 | 0.5%             |                                   |                 |
| Gender Non-conforming                            | 0.1%             |                                   |                 | 0.1%             |                                   |                 |
| <b>Age of All People in the Household</b>        |                  |                                   |                 |                  |                                   |                 |
| 18-24  | 11.0%            | 19.6%                             | 11.8%           | 10.1%            | 17.3%                             | 11.6%           |
| 25-34  | 20.6%            | 12.4%                             | 15.1%           | 20.3%            | 12.6%                             | 15.5%           |
| 35-44  | 20.6%            | 8.1%                              | 8.6%            | 21.1%            | 8.5%                              | 8.5%            |
| 45-54  | 22.6%            | 12.6%                             | 13.7%           | 21.9%            | 12.6%                             | 13.0%           |
| 55-64  | 19.7%            | 20.9%                             | 21.4%           | 20.4%            | 21.5%                             | 21.2%           |
| 65 and older                                     | 5.5%             | 26.2%                             | 29.4%           | 6.2%             | 27.3%                             | 30.1%           |
| <b>Ethnicity of Heads of Households</b>          |                  |                                   |                 |                  |                                   |                 |
| Hispanic/Latino                                  | 14.2%            | 13.8%                             | 10.8%           | 14.9%            | 14.1%                             | 11.1%           |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                          | 85.8%            | 86.2%                             | 89.2%           | 85.1%            | 85.9%                             | 88.9%           |
| <b>Race of Heads of Households</b>               |                  |                                   |                 |                  |                                   |                 |
| Asian or Asian American                          | 0.7%             | 4.4%                              | 4.9%            | 0.9%             | 4.5%                              | 5.0%            |
| Black or African American                        | 38.7%            | 21.0%                             | 12.9%           | 37.8%            | 20.5%                             | 12.4%           |
| Multiple Races                                   | 3.3%             | 2.7%                              | 2.1%            | 3.7%             | 9.3%                              | 7.7%            |
| Native American/American Indian or Alaska Native | 3.1%             | 1.5%                              | 0.8%            | 3.5%             | 1.5%                              | 0.8%            |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander              | 0.9%             | 0.2%                              | 0.1%            | 0.9%             | 0.2%                              | 0.1%            |
| White, Hispanic/Latino                           | 9.8%             | 8.9%                              | 7.3%            | 9.9%             | 3.1%                              | 2.6%            |
| White, non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                   | 43.5%            | 57.2%                             | 69.7%           | 43.3%            | 55.7%                             | 68.3%           |

<sup>a</sup> Data on characteristics exclude people for whom the characteristic is missing/unknown.

<sup>b</sup> Data on age is based on all people in adult-only households. Gender, ethnicity, and race are based on the heads of household.

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS

## Changes in Characteristics of the Sheltered Population

- Between 2019 and 2020, the characteristics of the sheltered population in adult-only households changed very little. Compared with 2019, the sheltered population in adult-only households was slightly more male and slightly older.
- Seventy percent of people staying in shelter programs in 2020 were men compared with 69 percent in 2019. Youth between the ages of 18 and 24 accounted for 11 percent of the sheltered population in 2019 and 10 percent in 2020. Meanwhile, 25 percent of the sheltered adult-only population was elderly or near elderly in 2019 compared with 27 percent in 2020.
- The race and ethnicity of the sheltered population was largely the same in 2020 as in 2019.

## Geographic Distribution of Sheltered Households

- More than three-fourths of adult-only households using shelters did so in urban areas (78%). This is double the share of all U.S. adult-only households in urban areas (35%) and much higher than the percentage of adult-only households in poverty in urban areas (42%).
- By comparison, while 39 percent of adult-only households in the United States lived in a suburban community, only 14 percent of the sheltered population stayed in shelters in suburban locations in 2020.
- Approximately seven percent of sheltered adult-only households were staying in rural areas in 2020 compared with 27 percent of adult-only households in poverty and 26 percent of the total population of adult-only households.

## Changes in Geographic Distribution of Households

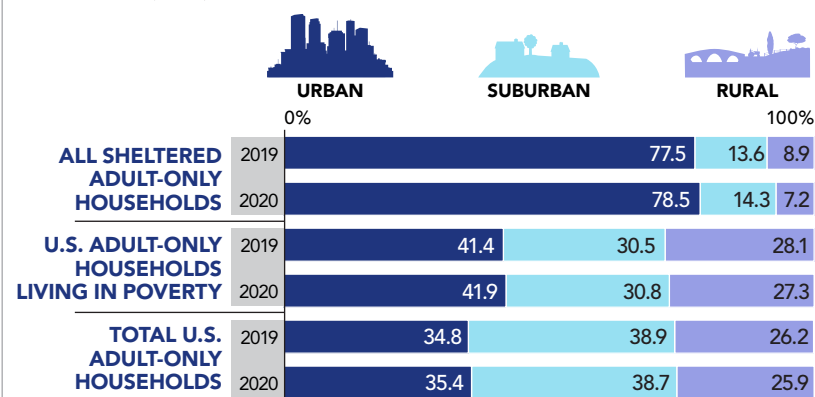
- Between 2019 and 2020, the distribution of adult-only households accessing shelters shifted slightly toward urban areas.
- In 2019, nine percent of adult-only households in shelters were in rural areas, dropping to seven percent in 2020.
- The share of households using shelters that did so in urban areas increased from 78 percent to 79 percent between 2019 and 2020, and the share of suburban households remained at 14 percent across both years.

## Additional Characteristics of Heads of Households and Other Adults

- In 2020, 22 percent of sheltered adults in households without children had a chronic pattern of homelessness. People in adult-only households in urban areas had the highest rates of chronic homelessness (23%) and rural areas had the lowest rates of chronic homelessness among people in adult-only households (16%).
- Ten percent of all sheltered people in adult-only households were veterans in 2020. Veterans accounted for a slightly higher share of people in adult-only households in urban areas and suburban areas (10%) than in rural areas (9%).
- Eighteen percent of people in adult-only households staying in shelter were survivors of domestic violence in 2020, and five percent were currently fleeing domestic violence. It is important to note that this data represent survivors of domestic violence that accessed

## EXHIBIT 2.5: Geographic Location of Sheltered Adult-Only Households

2019-2020 (in %)



“During 2020 the addition of funding from COVID relief efforts has led to the addition of many projects and inventories... many were active and available but did not serve clients during the report period. The addition of these beds has had an impact on utilization. For existing shelters, the need to social distance clients also impacted utilization. In some cases, shelters moved clients into alternate housing configurations during high COVID outbreaks.”

–Rural CoC in the Midwest

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS

homeless services that were not operated by victim service providers and should not be considered the full estimate of survivorship among individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness. Given the way data are reported, it is not possible to understand the percentage of adults in each geographic category who are survivors of domestic violence – regardless of fleeing status. However, data are available on the share of people *currently fleeing* domestic violence by geography. In 2020, rural areas accounted for the highest share of people in adult-only households who were currently fleeing unsafe situations (7%), while five percent of all adults in shelter programs in urban areas and four percent of heads of households or other adults in suburban areas were currently fleeing unsafe situations.

### Changes in Additional Characteristics of People in Adult-Only Households

- Overall, people in adult-only households who were able to access shelters in 2020 appeared somewhat more vulnerable in 2020 than in 2019. While the total number of people in adult-only households dropped by 12 percent between 2019 and 2020, the number experiencing chronic homelessness increased by six percent. The share of the adult-only population that had chronic patterns increased from 19 percent to 22 percent. Increases in the percentage of people in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness occurred in each geographic type. This follows trends identified in Part 1 of the 2021 AHAR, which showed that sheltered chronically homeless individuals increased during the pandemic while other populations declined.
- Most veterans experience homelessness in adult-only households (See Chapter 5). The number of homeless veterans in adult-only households dropped by 16 percent between 2019 and 2020, while the share of the adult-only households who were veterans remained at 10 percent across both years.
- The total number of people in adult-only households who were survivors of domestic violence decreased slightly overall, by 4 percent, between 2019 and 2020, although their share of all adult-only households increased slightly. The drop was driven by those not currently fleeing domestic violence. While the number of people currently fleeing domestic violence remained about the same between 2019 and 2020, the share of people currently fleeing increased overall and in each geographic category.
- While the number of people with a disability decreased between 2019 and 2020 (by 6%), the share of the adult-only population with a disability increased from 52 percent to 55 percent in the same time period.

### EXHIBIT 2.6: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless People

2019-2020

|  | 2019    |       | 2020    |       | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|--|---------|-------|---------|-------|------------------|--------|
|  | #       | %     | #       | %     | #                | %      |
| <b>Chronic Homeless Status of Heads of Households and Adults</b> |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Chronically Homeless   | 173,588 | 18.6% | 184,467 | 22.4% | 10,879           | 6.3%   |
| Not Chronically Homeless or Chronic Status Unknown               | 762,175 | 81.4% | 640,032 | 77.6% | -122,143         | -16.0% |
| <b>Veteran Status</b>  |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Veteran  | 97,199  | 10.4% | 82,134  | 10.0% | -15,065          | -15.5% |
| Non-Veteran  | 829,276 | 88.6% | 729,429 | 88.5% | -99,847          | -12.0% |
| Veteran Status Unknown   | 9,288   | 1.0%  | 12,936  | 1.6%  | 3,648            | 39.3%  |
| <b>Survivors of Domestic Violence</b>                            |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Total DV Survivors   | 157,085 | 16.8% | 151,493 | 18.4% | -5,592           | -3.6%  |
| DV Survivors Currently Fleeing                                   | 43,046  | 4.6%  | 43,347  | 5.3%  | 301              | 0.7%   |
| DV Survivors Not Currently Fleeing                               | 102,247 | 10.9% | 98,083  | 11.9% | -4,164           | -4.1%  |
| DV Survivors with Unknown Fleeing Status                         | 11,792  | 1.3%  | 10,063  | 1.2%  | -1,729           | -14.7% |
| Not DV Survivors   | 707,690 | 75.6% | 618,594 | 75.0% | -89,096          | -12.6% |
| Unknown DV Status  | 70,988  | 7.6%  | 54,413  | 6.6%  | -16,575          | -23.3% |
| <b>Disability Status</b>   |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Disabled   | 486,646 | 52.0% | 456,349 | 55.3% | -30,297          | -6.2%  |
| Not Disabled   | 430,248 | 46.0% | 347,417 | 42.1% | -82,831          | -19.3% |
| Disability Status Unknown  | 18,870  | 2.0%  | 20,734  | 2.5%  | 1,864            | 9.9%   |

Note: These estimates take advantage of the system-use analysis supported by HMIS data and use a three-year period to determine whether a person's homelessness is chronic.

### EXHIBIT 2.7: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Adult-only Households by Geography

2019-2020 (in %)

| Characteristic of Households        | Urban Households |       | Suburban Households |       | Rural Households |       |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                                     | 2019             | 2020  | 2019                | 2020  | 2019             | 2020  |
| Chronically Homeless Adult          | 19.7%            | 23.1% | 18.4%               | 22.4% | 11.5%            | 16.1% |
| Veteran                             | 10.6%            | 10.3% | 11.7%               | 9.7%  | 8.1%             | 9.2%  |
| Currently Fleeing Domestic Violence | 4.7%             | 5.4%  | 3.7%                | 4.0%  | 5.6%             | 6.5%  |

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS

**Comparison to 2018 Estimates of People in Sheltered Adult-Only Households**

The estimated number of people experiencing homelessness in adult-only households in 2018 cannot be compared to the estimates of people in 2019 and 2020 because of a slightly different reporting universe. The 2018 estimates are slightly broader and include some people who were actively engaged in the homeless services system but did not have a bed night in one of the programs. See About this Report for more information. For comparability, the table below re-creates the 2019 and 2020 estimates using the 2018 reporting universe.

Overall, estimates of homelessness using the 2018 universe remained largely unchanged between 2018 and 2019, while falling between 2018 and 2020.

**EXHIBIT 2.8: 2019 and 2020 Estimates Using 2018 Reporting Universe**

|   | 2018    | 2019    | 2020    | Number Change<br>2018-2019 | Percent Change<br>2018-2019 | Number Change<br>2018-2020 | Percent Change<br>2018-2020 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of Adult-only Households           | 924,891 | 925,819 | 816,947 | 928                        | 0.1%                        | -107,944                   | -11.7%                      |
| Number of People in Adult-only Households | 934,343 | 942,870 | 833,073 | 8,527                      | 0.9%                        | -101,270                   | -10.8%                      |

Note: Data in Exhibit 2.8 are based on people in adult-only households active in the homeless assistance system, and not limited to those with at least one bed night in the homeless assistance system.





**2019-2020**

# Estimates of Sheltered People in Families with Children

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# Estimates of Sheltered People IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

## Estimates of Homelessness among Sheltered Families

**More than 400,000 people in families with children** (416,907) accessed an emergency shelter or transitional housing program at some point from October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020. These people experiencing sheltered homelessness as part of a family were in **132,178 family households**.

In March 2020, about halfway through the 2020 reporting year, the United States declared a state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the highly contagious nature of the virus and the lack of vaccines at the time, the pandemic 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 increased physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some cases, this reduced capacity was reported in HMIS, but in other communities it was not. In addition, common places where people experiencing homelessness can connect with services providers, including libraries, town halls, and public parks were also closed during much of this period. Estimates of the number of families with children using shelters during the 2020 reporting year should be viewed with extreme caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities, as well as people's reluctance to enter or remain in shelters.

- About one-third (32%) of all people using shelters in 2020 were in families with at least one adult and one child.
- One of every 263 people in families in the U.S. experienced sheltered homelessness at some point during 2020.
- People staying in shelters were nearly four percent of all people with incomes below the poverty line and six percent of households in poverty.
- The average household size for families experiencing sheltered homelessness was 3.2 people in 2020.

### Changes over Time

The reporting period for 2019 is October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. An estimated 507,244 people in families with children stayed in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program at some point during that year. Given the change to a new platform known as the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), 2019 has now become the baseline for reporting year-to-year change. The text box at the end of this section compares the estimates for 2018, 2019, and 2020 using the 2018 reporting universe. The data reported in this chapter are based on the

“Some shelters reduced capacity to comply with CDC guidelines, some experienced temporary closures to new residents due to COVID outbreaks, and many clients were reluctant/refused to access congregate shelters for fear of COVID.”  
–Urban CoC in the Midwest

**EXHIBIT 3.1: One-Year Estimates of Sheltered Family Homelessness**  
2019-2020

|                             | 2019    | 2020    | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|------------------|--------|
|                             | #       | #       | #                | %      |
| Family Households           | 157,827 | 132,178 | -25,649          | -16.3% |
| People in Family Households | 507,224 | 416,907 | -90,317          | -17.8% |
| Average Family Size         | 3.21    | 3.15    | -.06             | -1.9%  |

**EXHIBIT 3.2: Changes in Estimates of Families Using Shelter, Households in Poverty, and U.S. Households**  
2019-2020

| Characteristic              | Change in People 2019-2020 |        | Change in Households 2019-2020 |        |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|
|                             | #                          | %      | #                              | %      |
| Staying in Shelter Programs | -90,317                    | -17.8% | -25,649                        | -16.3% |
| Living in Poverty           | -1,156,787                 | -5.3%  | -492,192                       | -9.8%  |
| In U.S. Population          | -247,005                   | -0.2%  | -433,674                       | -1.2%  |

Source: 2019 and 2020 LSA data, 2019 and 2020 ACS data

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

reporting universe adopted in 2019.

Between 2019 and 2020, the number of people who were able to access shelters as part of a family with children dropped substantially, by 18 percent or 90,317 people, and the number of family households dropped by 16 percent. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March of 2020—about halfway through the reporting year—contributed to this decline in family homelessness and should be viewed with extreme caution. In addition to reduced shelter capacity and concerns about safety, homeless prevention efforts such as those funded through the CARES Act, together with eviction moratoria, likely reduced the number of families with children using shelter during the last six months of the 2020 reporting period. The number of families living in poverty also dropped between 2019 and 2020, by 10 percent, while the number of all family households dropped by just one percent. Because of the data collection timeframe, Census data for 2020 likely do not capture the full economic impacts of the pandemic.

### System Engagement of Family Households

Data collected through the LSA provides information on whether households experiencing homelessness are doing so for the first time, are continuously engaged in the homeless system from the prior year or have returned to homelessness after exiting to a permanent, temporary, or unknown situation. For families, the system engagement data reflect considerably reduced inflow into homelessness during the pandemic, either coming into the shelter system for the first time or returning to the system after an exit. At the same time, more people were continuously engaged by the homeless services system, reflecting an apparent increased difficulty in leaving homelessness.

- In 2020, 56 percent of family households were homeless for the first time.
- More than one-third (35%) of family households were continuously engaged, meaning that they were also homeless on the day prior to the start of the 2020 reporting period.
- Nine percent of sheltered family households had returned to homelessness during the 2020 reporting period within two years of exiting homelessness. Of those, two percent had previously exited to a temporary destination such as doubling up with friends or family on a temporary basis or other temporary, non-homeless situations. Four percent returned after having exited to a permanent destination, such as their own rental unit. Three percent returned after exiting to an unknown destination.

### Changes in System Engagement

- While the overall number of family households that used a shelter program declined by 16 percent between 2019 and 2020, the number of family households returning to shelter within two years declined by nearly 29 percent. The number of families homeless for the first time also dropped substantially—by 25 percent. Thus, the drop in family homelessness is likely related to reduced inflows into the shelter system and not to quicker exits.
- The 29 percent drop in returns to shelter for families is in contrast, a much smaller decline for adult-only households. Only one percent fewer adult-only households returned to homelessness in 2020 than in 2019.

**EXHIBIT 3.3: Type of Engagement in the Homeless System**  
2019-2020

| Place Stayed                            | 2019    |        | 2020    |        | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|---|---------|--------|---------|--------|------------------|--------|
|   | #       | %      | #       | %      | #                | %      |
| All Family Households                   | 157,827 | 100.0% | 132,178 | 100.0% | -25,648          | -16.3% |
| First-time Homeless                     | 98,393  | 62.3%  | 73,967  | 56.0%  | -24,426          | -24.8% |
| Continuously Engaged                    | 42,837  | 27.1%  | 46,367  | 35.1%  | 3,530            | 8.2%   |
| Returned to Homelessness Within 2 Years | 16,596  | 10.5%  | 11,845  | 9.0%   | -4,752           | -28.6% |
| After Exiting to Temporary Destination  | 3,151   | 2.0%   | 2,674   | 2.0%   | -477             | -15.1% |
| After Exiting to Permanent Destination  | 5,906   | 3.7%   | 4,840   | 3.7%   | -1,067           | -18.1% |
| After Exiting to Unknown Destination    | 7,539   | 4.8%   | 4,331   | 3.3%   | -3,208           | -42.6% |

“This CoC has seen fewer families presenting for shelter and experiencing homelessness. This year was also the first time there wasn’t a year long wait list for Section 8 vouchers for families. The [community action agency] in this community received robust funding that allowed them to keep families housed and provide rental assistance for longer periods of time.”

—Suburban CoC in the West

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

- However, similar to adult-only households, family households that remained engaged in the shelter system between 2019 and 2020 increased by eight percent. These data largely precede community efforts to rapidly rehouse people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.

### Characteristics and Household Composition of Sheltered Family Households

- Women headed nine of every 10 families with children staying in shelters in 2020 (90%). This is a higher percentage than among families living in poverty, where the rate of women heads of household is 72 percent. Just over half of all U.S. families, 54 percent, have woman heads.
- Children made up 61 percent of family members staying in shelters in 2020. Nearly three in 10 people in families were five years of age or younger (29%), and nearly one-third were between the ages of six and 17 (32%). The next largest group of people in sheltered adult and child households was adults between the ages of 25 and 34 (17%), followed by those aged 35 to 44 (10%).
- Sheltered families with children are generally younger than all families in the U.S. and families in poverty. The percentage of people who were five or younger (29%) was much higher among families using shelters than among all families in the U.S. (15%) or families living in poverty (18%). One-quarter of people in families were between the ages of 18 and 34, compared with 22 percent of people in all families in the United States and 19 percent of people in families living in poverty. Only four percent of people staying in shelter as part of a family were 45 years of age or older compared with 11 percent of all people in U.S. families and 17 percent of families in poverty.
- People identifying as Black or African American were considerably overrepresented among homeless families in 2020. Black people accounted for 54 percent of heads of sheltered families with children but are only 12 percent of all U.S. heads of families with children and 24 percent of heads of families living in poverty.
- While the numbers are smaller, family households identifying as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander were a higher share of families using shelter programs in 2020 (1.2%) than their share in the U.S. population (0.1%) or the population living with incomes below the poverty line (0.2%).
- Similarly, the percent of sheltered families that were headed by a person identifying as Native American, American Indian, or Alaska Native was double that of the U.S. population (0.8%), and higher than the percent of Native American families in poverty (1.5%).
- Families identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x (any race) were a smaller share of family households using shelter than their share of the population of families living in poverty. They were 24 percent of all heads of families using shelters compared with 30 percent of heads of families living in poverty.
- Families headed by a person identifying as White and not Hispanic made up only 23 percent of families using shelter, compared with 56 percent of all U.S. families whose heads identify as White and not Hispanic.

### EXHIBIT 3.4: Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless Families with Children 2019-2020

|  | 2019                             |  |                                   | 2020                             |  |                                   |
|--|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
|  | Sheltered Families with Children | U.S. Families with Children in Poverty | Total U.S. Families with Children | Sheltered Families with Children | U.S. Families with Children in Poverty | Total U.S. Families with Children |
| <b>Gender of Heads of Households</b>             |                                  |  |                                   |                                  |  |                                   |
| Male   | 10.7%                            | 26.3%                                  | 46.6%                             | 10.1%                            | 28.1%                                  | 46.3%                             |
| Female   | 89.3%                            | 73.7%                                  | 53.4%                             | 89.9%                            | 71.9%                                  | 53.7%                             |
| Transgender                                      | <0.1%                            |  |                                   | <0.1%                            |  |                                   |
| Gender non-conforming                            | <0.1%                            |  |                                   | <0.1%                            |  |                                   |
| <b>Age of All People in the Household</b>        |                                  |  |                                   |                                  |  |                                   |
| 5 or under                                       | 29.1%                            | 18.8%                                  | 14.8%                             | 29.1%                            | 18.2%                                  | 14.7%                             |
| 6-17   | 31.8%                            | 35.7%                                  | 31.6%                             | 31.5%                            | 31.6%                                  | 36.0%                             |
| 18-24  | 8.1%                             | 8.2%                                   | 6.5%                              | 8.1%                             | 6.4%                                   | 8.0%                              |
| 25-34  | 16.9%                            | 13.8%                                  | 12.5%                             | 17.1%                            | 12.2%                                  | 13.6%                             |
| 35-44  | 9.9%                             | 12.8%                                  | 17.5%                             | 10.1%                            | 17.8%                                  | 13.1%                             |
| 45-54  | 3.3%                             | 6.2%                                   | 11.1%                             | 3.2%                             | 11.3%                                  | 6.4%                              |
| 55-64  | 0.8%                             | 2.8%                                   | 3.7%                              | 0.7%                             | 3.6%                                   | 2.9%                              |
| 65 and older                                     | 0.2%                             | 1.8%                                   | 2.4%                              | 0.2%                             | 2.3%                                   | 1.8%                              |
| <b>Ethnicity of Heads of Households</b>          |                                  |  |                                   |                                  |  |                                   |
| Hispanic/Latino                                  | 24.0%                            | 30.0%                                  | 21.0%                             | 24.1%                            | 29.9%                                  | 20.7%                             |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                          | 76.0%                            | 69.7%                                  | 79.0%                             | 75.9%                            | 70.1%                                  | 79.3%                             |
| <b>Race of Heads of Households</b>               |                                  |  |                                   |                                  |  |                                   |
| Asian or Asian American                          | 0.7%                             | 4.4%                                   | 4.9%                              | 0.6%                             | 4.5%                                   | 5.0%                              |
| Black or African American                        | 52.2%                            | 25.3%                                  | 13.8%                             | 54.2%                            | 23.8%                                  | 12.2%                             |
| Multiple Races                                   | 4.2%                             | 3.2%                                   | 2.6%                              | 4.1%                             | 13.3%                                  | 11.1%                             |
| Native American/American Indian or Alaska Native | 1.9%                             | 1.5%                                   | 0.8%                              | 2.0%                             | 1.5%                                   | 0.8%                              |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander              | 1.2%                             | 0.2%                                   | 0.1%                              | 1.2%                             | 0.2%                                   | 0.1%                              |
| White, Hispanic/Latino                           | 15.6%                            | 19.5%                                  | 13.9%                             | 15.0%                            | 6.9%                                   | 4.7%                              |
| White, non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                   | 24.2%                            | 37.5%                                  | 56.6%                             | 22.9%                            | 37.1%                                  | 56.3%                             |

Data on characteristics excludes people for whom the characteristic is missing/unknown.

Note: Data on race and gender are based on the heads of household.

Note: HMIS data and ACS data have slightly different race categories. Therefore, a very small number of households are not counted in the ACS-based comparisons to HMIS data on shelter users.

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

- Sheltered families were considerably smaller than both all families in the U.S. and families living in poverty. In 2020, more than one-third of families using shelters consisted of just one adult and one child (35%), a much larger share than the 14 percent of families in poverty and seven percent of all families in the U.S.
- A single adult with one or two children was the most common composition of a family using shelter, more than 56 percent of sheltered families. A quarter of families using shelters in 2020 had more than one adult. This is a smaller percentage than the two-thirds of families living in poverty that have more than one adult and may reflect shelter rules or the even lower incomes (compared to the poverty definition) of families who experience homelessness.
- Sheltered family households were less likely to have three or more children than families in poverty, but more likely to have three or more children than all family households in the U.S. In 2020, 27 percent of families using shelter had three or more children compared with 21 percent of all families in the U.S. and 33 percent of families in poverty.

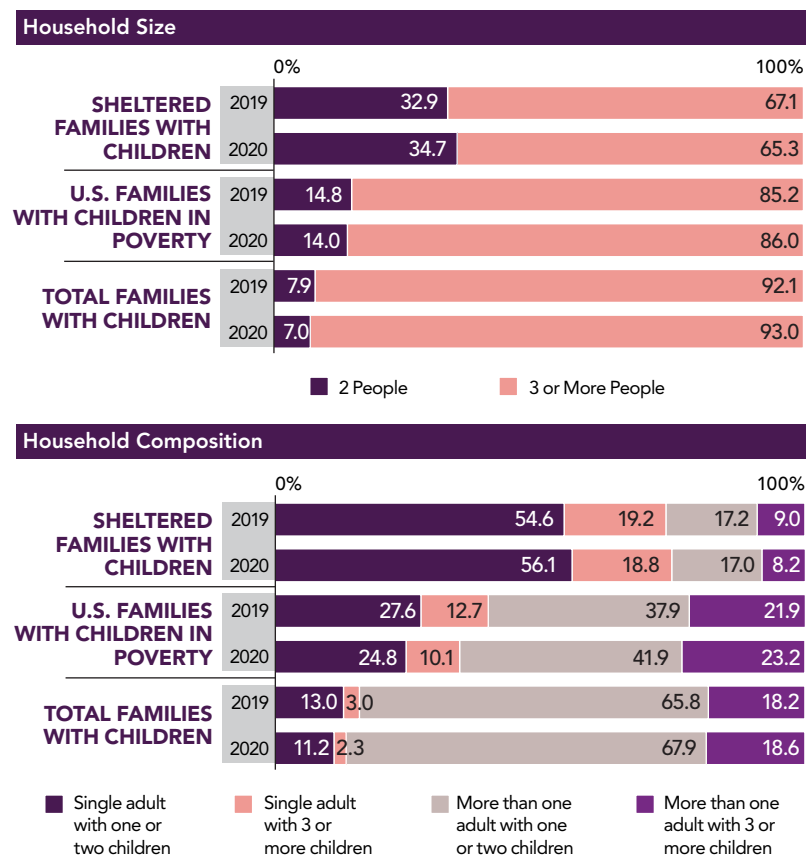
### Changes in Characteristics and Household Composition

- Despite the decline in family homelessness between 2019 and 2020, the characteristics of families using shelters were virtually the same in 2020 as in 2019. The share of women designated as heads of households increased from 89 percent in 2019 to 90 percent in 2020. The age distribution of people in families was the same across the two reporting years.
- The percentage of White, non-Hispanic/non-Latino/a/x heads of sheltered adult and child households declined slightly, from 24 percent in 2019 to 23 percent in 2020.
- The overrepresentation of Black/African American families increased somewhat during the pandemic. The percentage of families in poverty identifying as Black or African American declined slightly between 2019 and 2020 (from 25% to 24%), while the percentage of Black or African American families staying in shelters increased from 52 percent in 2019 to 54 percent in 2020.
- Between 2019 and 2020, families using shelter programs got slightly smaller. The two-person families (a parent and one child) staying in shelter increased from 33 percent in 2019 to 35 percent in 2020, while the percentage with three or more people dropped from 67 to 65 percent.

### Geographic Location of Sheltered Families

- In 2020, more than three-fourths of families using shelters did so in urban areas (77%). This is more than double the percentage of U.S. family households living in urban areas (33%), and much higher than families in poverty living in urban areas (43%). This high percentage of families using shelters that do so in urban areas is likely related to several factors, including limited affordable housing options in urban areas and the density of homeless services in those areas.
- While 43 percent of families in the United States lived in a suburban community, only 17 percent of families using shelters were in suburban areas in 2020.

**EXHIBIT 3.5: Household Size and Composition of Sheltered Homeless Families, U.S. Poverty Population, and Total U.S. Population**  
2019-2020



## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

- Families using shelters were underrepresented in rural areas as well. Rural areas accounted for 6 percent of homeless households, while 25 percent of U.S. families and 28 percent of families living in poverty were in rural areas.

## Changes in Geographic Distribution of Households

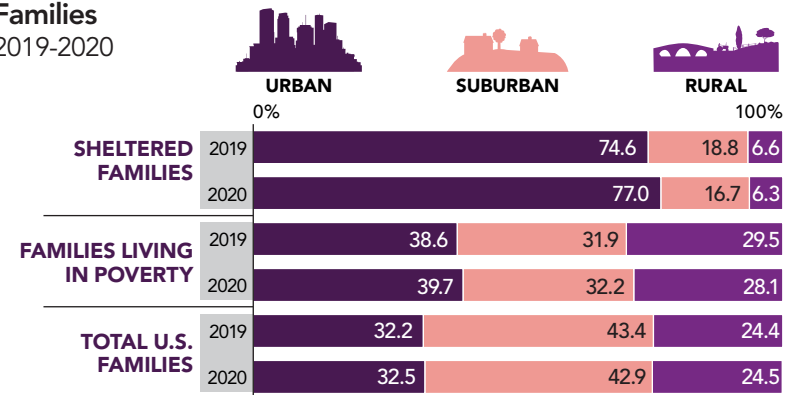
- Between 2019 and 2020, the distribution of family households using shelters shifted slightly toward urban areas.
- In 2019, 75 percent of family households in shelters were in urban areas, increasing to 77 percent in 2020.
- The share of households using shelters that did so in suburban areas decreased from 19 percent to 17 percent between 2019 and 2020, and the share of rural households did not change.

## Additional Characteristics of Adults in Family Households

- In 2020, 8 percent of adults in sheltered families with children had chronic patterns of homelessness. Chronic homelessness among family households of adults in families with children was highest in suburban areas (11%) and lowest in rural areas (7%).
- One percent of adults in families staying in shelters were veterans. Rates were similar across geographic types.
- In 2020, about one-third (32%) of adults in families staying in shelters were survivors of domestic violence, and 15 percent were currently fleeing unsafe situations. It is important to note that this data represents survivors of domestic violence that accessed homeless services that were not operated by victim service providers and should not be considered the full estimate of survivorship among sheltered families. Given the way data are reported, it is not possible to understand the percentage of adults in each geographic category who are survivors of domestic violence – regardless of fleeing status. However, data are available on the share of people *currently fleeing* domestic violence by geography.

## EXHIBIT 3.6: Geographic Location of Sheltered Homeless Families

2019-2020



## EXHIBIT 3.7: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Families

2019-2020

|  | 2019    |       | 2020    |       |
|--|---------|-------|---------|-------|
|  | #       | %     | #       | %     |
| <b>Chronic Homeless Status of Heads of Households and Other Adults in Families</b>           |         |       |         |       |
| Chronically Homeless   | 12,043  | 6.1%  | 12,321  | 7.5%  |
| Not Chronically Homeless or Chronic Status Unknown   | 186,242 | 93.9% | 152,013 | 92.5% |
| <b>Veteran Status of Heads of Households and Other Adults in Families</b>                    |         |       |         |       |
| Veteran  | 3,132   | 1.6%  | 2,262   | 1.4%  |
| Non-Veteran  | 194,157 | 97.9% | 160,536 | 97.7% |
| Veteran Status Unknown   | 942     | 0.5%  | 1,484   | 0.9%  |
| <b>Domestic Violence Survivor Status of Heads of Households and Other Adults in Families</b> |         |       |         |       |
| Total DV Survivors   | 59,444  | 30.0% | 53,267  | 32.4% |
| DV Survivors Currently Fleeing   | 26,234  | 13.2% | 25,131  | 15.3% |
| DV Survivors Not Currently Fleeing   | 31,133  | 15.7% | 26,519  | 16.1% |
| DV Survivors with Unknown Fleeing Status   | 2,076   | 1.0%  | 1,617   | 1.0%  |
| Not DV Survivors   | 119,783 | 60.4% | 99,867  | 60.8% |
| Unknown DV Status  | 19,058  | 9.6%  | 11,200  | 6.8%  |
| <b>Disability Status of Heads of Households and Other Adults in Families</b>                 |         |       |         |       |
| Disabled   | 50,451  | 25.4% | 43,246  | 26.3% |
| Not Disabled   | 146,563 | 73.9% | 119,437 | 72.7% |
| Disability Status Unknown  | 1,271   | 0.6%  | 1,651   | 1.0%  |

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED PEOPLE IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

## Changes in Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Families

- Overall, heads of households and other adults in sheltered families had higher rates of chronic homelessness, disability, and surviving domestic violence in 2020 than in 2019. While the total numbers of families using shelters dropped by 16 percent during the pandemic, the numbers of adults in families with chronic patterns of homelessness, while small, increased during the pandemic. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of families with children increased by eight percent, and the share with chronic patterns increased from six to eight percent. These increases occurred in urban and suburban areas, while chronic homelessness among families in rural areas remained largely unchanged.
- While the number of survivors of domestic violence in families using shelters declined by 10 percent between 2019 and 2020, the share of adults in families who were survivors of domestic violence increased from 30 to 32 percent. This reflected an increase in the share of adults currently fleeing domestic violence, from 13 percent to 15 percent. These increases occurred in urban and suburban areas, while remaining the same in rural areas.
- The share of veterans among adults in sheltered families also decreased from two percent in 2019 to one percent in 2020.
- The share of adults in sheltered families that had a disability increased slightly between 2019 and 2020, from 25 percent to 26 percent.

**EXHIBIT 3.8: Percent of Adults in Families with Additional Characteristics by Geography**  
2019 and 2020

|                                     | Urban Households |       | Suburban Households |       | Rural Households |       |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                                     | 2019             | 2020  | 2019                | 2020  | 2019             | 2020  |
| Chronically Homeless Families       | 6.2%             | 8.0%  | 8.8%                | 10.5% | 6.4%             | 6.5%  |
| Veteran Families                    | 1.8%             | 1.6%  | 2.5%                | 1.7%  | 2.5%             | 2.1%  |
| Currently Fleeing Domestic Violence | 16.9%            | 19.4% | 10.1%               | 11.6% | 15.6%            | 16.0% |

## Comparison to 2018 Estimates of Sheltered Homeless Families with Children

The estimated number of people experiencing homelessness in 2018 cannot be compared to the estimates of people in 2019 and 2020 because of a slightly different reporting universe. The 2018 estimates are slightly broader and include people who were actively engaged in the homeless services system, but who did not have a bed night in one of the programs. See About this Report for more information.

Family homelessness increased between 2018 and 2019 but dropped considerably between 2018 and 2020.

## EXHIBIT 3.9: 2019 and 2020 Estimates Using 2018 Reporting Universe

|  | 2018    | 2019    | 2020    | Number Change 2018-2019 | Percent Change 2018-2019 | Number Change 2018-2020 | Percent Change 2018-2020 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Number of Adult and Child Households           | 155,932 | 158,534 | 132,719 | 2,602                   | 1.7%                     | -23,213                 | -14.9%                   |
| Number of People in Adult and Child Households | 501,100 | 510,884 | 420,841 | 9,784                   | 2.0%                     | -80,259                 | -16.0%                   |

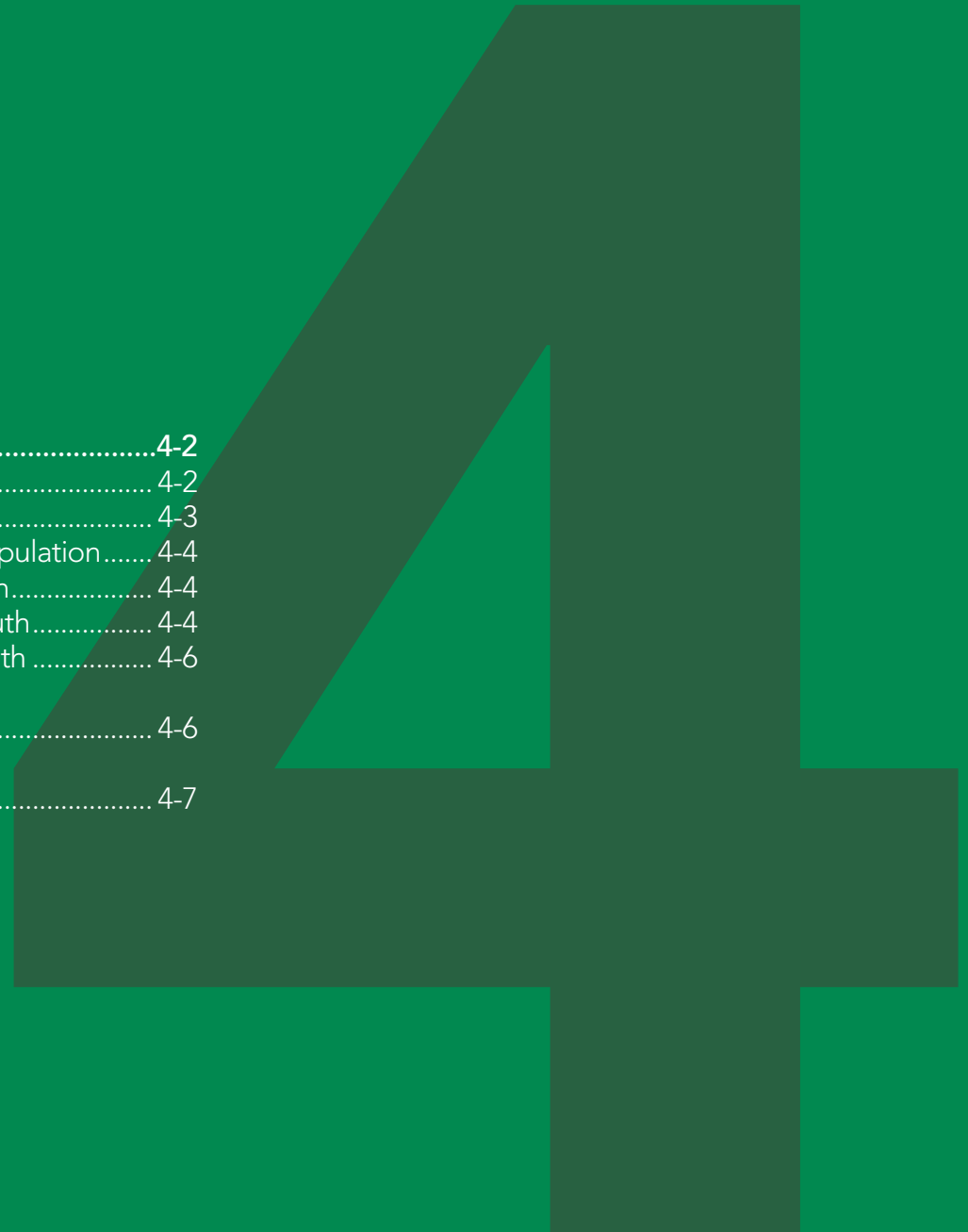
The universe for the 2018 estimates is people and households who were active during the report period, whether in residence or not (i.e., had at least one bed night during the reporting period). For the 2019 and 2020 estimates, it was possible to limit the estimates just to those people and households who were active in residence—i.e., had at least one bed night—during the report period. This exhibit provides comparable data between 2018 and 2019/2020. The remainder of the report uses just the “active in residence” definition.





# 2019-2020 Estimates of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth

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# Estimates of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth

## Estimates of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness

Approximately **93,000 unaccompanied youth** accessed an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some point between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020.

In March 2020, about halfway through the 2020 reporting year, the United States declared a state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the highly contagious nature of the virus and the lack of vaccines at the time, the pandemic 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 increased physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some communities, this reduced capacity was reported in HMIS, but in others it was not. In addition, common places where people experiencing homelessness can connect with services providers, including libraries, town halls, and public parks were also closed during much of this period. Estimates of the number of unaccompanied youth experiencing sheltered homelessness during the 2020 reporting year should be viewed with caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities, as well as people's reluctance to enter or remain in shelters.

Unaccompanied youth are a subset of sheltered adult-only households (people between the ages of 18 and 24 not with their parent) and child-only households that do not include a parent under the age of 18. In 2020, the combination of those households totaled 92,387. Most unaccompanied youth use shelters by themselves, so the number of people is only slightly higher, 93,404. About 11 percent of all sheltered people in adult-only and child-only households are unaccompanied youth.

### Changes between 2019 and 2020

The reporting year for 2019 is October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. An estimated 120,866 unaccompanied youth stayed in an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some point during that year. Given the change to a new platform known as the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), 2019 has now become the baseline for reporting year-to-year change. The text box at the end of this section compares the estimates for 2018, 2019, and 2020 using the 2018 reporting universe. The data reported in this chapter are based on the reporting universe adopted in 2019.

The number of people in unaccompanied youth households who were able to access shelters dropped by 23 percent between 2019 and 2020. This far outpaces declines in all adult-only

"...with the COVID pandemic response and safety protocols, we had to cut [the number of youth we serve] in half."  
 –Suburban CoC in the West

**EXHIBIT 4.1: One-Year Estimates of Sheltered Homelessness Among Unaccompanied Youth (Under 25)**  
 2019-2020

|                                | 2019    | 2020   | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|------------------|--------|
|                                | #       | #      | #                | %      |
| Unaccompanied Youth Households | 119,653 | 92,387 | -27,266          | -22.8% |
| Unaccompanied Youth            | 120,866 | 93,404 | -27,462          | -22.7% |

**EXHIBIT 4.2: Children Experiencing Homelessness on Their Own**  
 2019-2020

The LSA has separate estimates for households comprised of one or more children. Because they are only one percent of the entire sheltered homeless population, the characteristics of this population are included with other unaccompanied youth and not presented separately. A small number of the children in child-only households are parenting children.

| One-Year Estimates of Sheltered Homelessness among Child-Only Households |        |       |        |       |
|--|--------|-------|--------|-------|
|  | 2019   |       | 2020   |       |
| People in Child Only Households  | 22,251 |       | 14,060 |       |
| Number of Child Only Households  | 21,711 |       | 13,675 |       |
| People in Child-Only Households by Household Type                        |        |       |        |       |
|  | #      | %     | #      | %     |
| Not Parenting Children   | 21,374 | 98.4% | 13,337 | 97.5% |
| Parenting Children   | 337    | 1.6%  | 338    | 2.5%  |

**EXHIBIT 4.3: Change in Estimates of Unaccompanied Youth Households**  
 2019-2020

| Characteristic                        | Change in People |        | Change in Households |        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|
|                                       | #                | %      | #                    | %      |
| Unaccompanied Youth                   | -27,462          | -22.7% | -27,266              | -22.8% |
| Unaccompanied Youth Living in Poverty | -367,939         | -15.9% | -106,567             | -9.6%  |
| Total Unaccompanied Youth in U.S.     | -323,620         | -3.7%  | 3,537                | 0.1%   |

<sup>a</sup> Unaccompanied youth in the U.S. population and the U.S. poverty population are people under the age of 25 who are living on their own, not with a parent or guardian, and not with a child of their own.

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

households using shelters, which dropped by only 12 percent. The COVID-19 pandemic makes it difficult to interpret that drop because of reduced capacity and safety concerns that may have kept people out of shelter. Again, these declines should be viewed with extreme caution. Youth may have had a broader range of alternatives to staying in shelters than relatively older adults. During the same time period, the number of unaccompanied youth households living in poverty decreased by almost 16 percent, and the total number of unaccompanied youth in the U.S. declined by four percent. The Census data are based on estimates in the spring of 2020, so they do not capture the full economic impact of the pandemic.

### Characteristics of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth

- Fifty-six percent of unaccompanied youth were men or boys.<sup>1</sup> Forty-two percent identified as female, a larger percentage than for all heads of adult-only households, only 29 percent of whom were women. Transgender people were nearly 2 percent of unaccompanied youth, and people identifying as gender non-conforming comprised 0.6 percent. While small, these percentages are higher than for all adult-only households, among whom 0.5 percent were transgender, and 0.1 percent identified as gender non-conforming. Unaccompanied youth who used a shelter program in 2020 were younger than youth living in poverty or all unaccompanied youth in the U.S. Approximately 14 percent of unaccompanied youth households in shelter were under 18, compared with one percent of unaccompanied youth living in poverty and two percent of unaccompanied youth in the U.S. population as a whole.
- Unaccompanied youth identifying as Black or African American were notably overrepresented among sheltered unaccompanied youth households. Black people comprised 42 percent of people in unaccompanied youth households, while accounting for only 14 percent of the U.S. unaccompanied youth population and similarly, 13 percent of unaccompanied youth living in poverty. The share of unaccompanied youth who are Black is somewhat higher than the share of all adult-only households using shelters, which was 38 percent in 2020.
- People who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a/x were 19 percent of unaccompanied youth staying in shelters, higher than the share of all adult-only households using shelters (15%). Unaccompanied youth in shelter were also more likely to be Hispanic or Latino/a/x than unaccompanied youth living in poverty (15%) than all unaccompanied youth in the U.S. (14%).
- Native Americans accounted for three percent of unaccompanied youth using shelter programs in 2020, similar to their share of adult-only households using shelters (4%). However, three percent is more than double the Native American share of unaccompanied youth with incomes below the poverty line and considerably higher than the Native American share of all unaccompanied youth in the U.S.
- About a third of unaccompanied youth using shelters identify as White and non-Hispanic (34%). This is a much smaller share than of all unaccompanied youth in the U.S. who are White and not Hispanic (61%) and of unaccompanied youth living in poverty (58%). They are

<sup>1</sup> The estimate is based on heads of household but is essentially the same as all unaccompanied youth since most are in shelter alone and not part of a household.

**EXHIBIT 4.4: Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless People in Unaccompanied Youth Households 2019-2020**

|  | 2019                          |  |                          | 2020                          |                                   |                          |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth | U.S. Unaccompanied Youth Living in Poverty | U.S. Unaccompanied Youth | Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth | U.S. Population Living in Poverty | U.S. Unaccompanied Youth |
| <b>Gender of Heads of Households</b>             |                               |  |                          |                               |                                   |                          |
| Female   | 43.0%                         | 52%  | 47%                      | 41.9%                         | 54%                               | 48%                      |
| Male   | 55.3%                         | 48%  | 53%                      | 55.9%                         | 46%                               | 52%                      |
| Transgender                                      | 1.3%                          |  |                          | 1.7%                          |                                   |                          |
| Gender Non-conforming                            | 0.4%                          |  |                          | 0.6%                          |                                   |                          |
| <b>Age of All People in the Household</b>        |                               |  |                          |                               |                                   |                          |
| Under 18   | 17.8%                         | 1%   | 2%                       | 14.3%                         | 1%                                | 2%                       |
| 18-21  | 46.3%                         | 60%  | 59%                      | 49.4%                         | 56%                               | 56%                      |
| 22-24  | 35.9%                         | 39%  | 39%                      | 36.2%                         | 43%                               | 41%                      |
| <b>Ethnicity of Heads of Households</b>          |                               |  |                          |                               |                                   |                          |
| Hispanic/Latino/a/x                              | 19.1%                         | 12%  | 14%                      | 19.4%                         | 15%                               | 14%                      |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino/a/x                      | 80.9%                         | 88%  | 86%                      | 80.6%                         | 85%                               | 86%                      |
| <b>Race of Heads of Households</b>               |                               |  |                          |                               |                                   |                          |
| Asian or Asian American                          | 0.8%                          | 4.4%                                       | 4.9%                     | 0.7%                          | 4.5%                              | 5.0%                     |
| Black or African American                        | 42.9%                         | 14%  | 15%                      | 42.1%                         | 13%                               | 14%                      |
| Multiple Races                                   | 6.2%                          | 4%   | 4%                       | 6.8%                          | 10%                               | 10%                      |
| Native American/American Indian or Alaska Native | 4.1%                          | 1.5%                                       | 0.8%                     | 3.3%                          | 1.5%                              | 0.8%                     |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander              | 0.8%                          | 0.2%                                       | 0.1%                     | 0.8%                          | 0.2%                              | 0.1%                     |
| White, Hispanic/Latino                           | 12.8%                         | 8%   | 9%                       | 12.3%                         | 6%                                | 4%                       |
| White, non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                   | 33.9%                         | 61%  | 61%                      | 34.0%                         | 58%                               | 61%                      |

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

also a smaller share than of all adult-only households using shelters, which was 43 percent in 2020.

### Changes in Characteristics of the Unaccompanied Youth Population

- Between 2019 and 2020, the characteristics of sheltered unaccompanied youth changed very little. Compared with 2019, the sheltered population of unaccompanied youth was slightly older and slightly more likely to be identified in the HMIS data as transgender or gender non-conforming.

### Geographic Distribution of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth

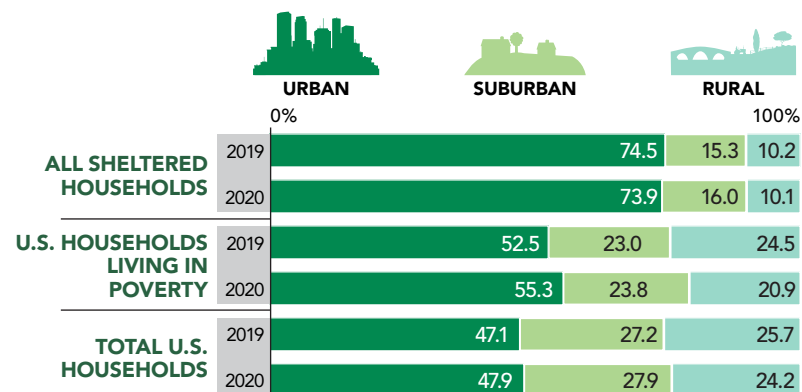
- Almost three-fourths of unaccompanied youth using shelters did so in urban areas (74%). This is much higher than the share of all U.S. unaccompanied youth in urban areas (48%) and the share of unaccompanied youth living in poverty found in urban areas (54%) but lower than the share of all adult-only households in urban areas (79%).
- The share of unaccompanied youth using shelters in suburban areas (16%) was lower than the share of unaccompanied youth in poverty in the suburbs (24%). Sheltered youth were more likely to be in suburban communities than all sheltered adult-only households (14%).
- A larger share of sheltered unaccompanied youth was in rural areas than all sheltered adult-only households, 10 percent vs. 7 percent for all adult-only households. However, this was substantially lower than the share of unaccompanied youth in poverty and all U.S. unaccompanied youth found in rural areas (21% and 24%).

### Changes in Geographic Distribution of Unaccompanied Youth

- The distribution of unaccompanied youth accessing shelters shifted slightly away from urban areas between 2019 and 2020.
- Overall sheltered homelessness among unaccompanied youth households declined by 23 percent between 2019 and 2020. These declines occurred across each type of geography, with rural areas reporting the largest declines in the number of unaccompanied youth households in shelter (24%). However, the share of sheltered unaccompanied youth located in rural areas did not change over the one-year period.
- Urban areas reported declines of 23 percent in sheltered homelessness among unaccompanied youth households, and this was also the only geographic category with a smaller share of youth in 2020 than in 2019 (74% vs. 75%). Suburban areas reported declines of 19 percent in the number of sheltered unaccompanied youth, but the share increased slightly, from 15 percent to 16 percent.
- While urban and rural areas experienced similar decreases in the number of sheltered unaccompanied youth households between 2019 and 2020, the number of unaccompanied youth living in poverty declined more in rural areas (23%) than in urban areas (5%).

### EXHIBIT 4.5: Geographic Distribution of Unaccompanied Youth Households

2019-2020 (in %)





## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

## Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth

- In 2020, 10 percent of unaccompanied youth using shelters had chronic patterns of homelessness. Unaccompanied youth households in urban areas had the highest rates (11%) and rural areas the lowest (8%). By comparison, 22 percent of all people in adult-only households had chronic patterns of homelessness.
- Twenty-two percent of unaccompanied youth staying in shelter were survivors of domestic violence in 2020, and seven percent were currently fleeing domestic violence. It is important to note that this data represent survivors of domestic violence that accessed homeless services that were not operated by victim service providers and should not be considered the full estimate of survivorship among unaccompanied youth experiencing sheltered homelessness.
- Given the way data are reported, it is not possible to show the percentage of people in each geographic category who are survivors of domestic violence – regardless of fleeing status. However, data are available on the share of people currently fleeing domestic violence by geography. In 2020, urban areas accounted for the highest share of people in unaccompanied youth households who were currently fleeing unsafe situations (8%), while six percent of all unaccompanied youth in shelter programs in suburban and rural areas were currently fleeing unsafe situations.
- Only one percent of sheltered unaccompanied youth were veterans in 2020, the same across all geographic categories.
- Nearly four of every 10 unaccompanied youth staying in shelters had a disability in 2020 (39%).

## Changes in Additional Characteristics of Unaccompanied Sheltered Youth

- Overall, unaccompanied youth using shelters in 2020 appeared somewhat more vulnerable in 2020 than in 2019. While the total number of people in sheltered youth households dropped by 23 percent between 2019 and 2020, the number experiencing chronic homelessness only decreased by four percent. The share of the sheltered, unaccompanied youth with chronic patterns increased from eight percent to 10 percent. Increases in the percentage of unaccompanied youth with chronic patterns of homelessness occurred in each geographic type.
- The number of sheltered, unaccompanied youth who were survivors of domestic violence decreased by 11 percent between 2019 and 2020, but their share of increased from 19 to 22 percent. The share of people currently fleeing domestic violence increased slightly overall (from 6% to 7%). The share of unaccompanied youth currently fleeing domestic violence increased most in rural areas, from four to six percent.
- While the number of people with a disability decreased between 2019 and 2020 (by 11%), the share of the unaccompanied youth with a disability increased from 34 percent to 39 percent in the same time period.

## EXHIBIT 4.6: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth 2019-2020

| Place Stayed   | 2019    |       | 2020   |       | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|--|---------|-------|--------|-------|------------------|--------|
|  | #       | %     | #      | %     | #                | %      |
| <b>Chronic Homeless Status of Heads of Households and Adults</b> |         |       |        |       |                  |        |
| Chronically Homeless   | 10,139  | 8.2%  | 9,693  | 10.3% | -446             | -4.4%  |
| Not Chronically Homeless or Chronic Status Unknown               | 110,727 | 91.8% | 83,711 | 89.7% | -27,016          | -24.4% |
| <b>Veteran Status</b>  |         |       |        |       |                  |        |
| Veteran  | 1,354   | 1.4%  | 1,023  | 1.3%  | -331             | -24.4% |
| Non-Veteran  | 97,418  | 97.8% | 77,737 | 97.0% | -19,681          | -20.2% |
| Veteran Status Unknown   | 853     | 0.9%  | 1,398  | 1.7%  | 545              | 63.9%  |
| <b>Survivors of Domestic Violence</b>                            |         |       |        |       |                  |        |
| Total DV Survivors   | 23,196  | 19.2% | 20,560 | 22.0% | -2,636           | -11.4% |
| DV Survivors Currently Fleeing                                   | 6,989   | 5.8%  | 6,634  | 7.1%  | -355             | -5.1%  |
| DV Survivors Not Currently Fleeing                               | 14,892  | 12.3% | 12,910 | 13.8% | -1,982           | -13.3% |
| DV Survivors with Unknown Fleeing Status                         | 1,315   | 1.1%  | 1,016  | 1.1%  | -299             | -22.7% |
| Not DV Survivors   | 78,659  | 65.2% | 61,665 | 66.1% | -16,994          | -21.6% |
| Unknown DV Status  | 18,816  | 15.6% | 11,113 | 11.9% | -7,703           | -40.9% |
| <b>Disability Status</b>   |         |       |        |       |                  |        |
| Disabled   | 40,547  | 33.6% | 36,065 | 38.6% | -4,482           | -11%   |
| Not Disabled   | 77,898  | 64.6% | 55,146 | 59.1% | -22,752          | -29.2% |
| Disability Status Unknown  | 2,225   | 1.8%  | 2,127  | 2.3%  | -98              | -4.4%  |

Note: These estimates take advantage of the system-use analysis supported by HMIS data and use a three-year period to determine if a person's homelessness is chronic.

## EXHIBIT 4.7: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth Households by Type of Geography 2019-2020

| Characteristic of Households | Urban Households |       | Suburban Households |      | Rural Households |      |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|------|------------------|------|
|                              | 2019             | 2020  | 2019                | 2020 | 2019             | 2020 |
| Chronically Homeless         | 8.8%             | 11.1% | 8.4%                | 9.1% | 5.1%             | 7.5% |
| Veteran                      | 1.2%             | 1.2%  | 0.7%                | 0.9% | 1.5%             | 1.2% |
| Domestic Violence Survivor   | 6.3%             | 7.5%  | 4.7%                | 5.6% | 4.0%             | 6.2% |

## ESTIMATES OF SHELTERED UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

**Comparison to 2018 Estimates of People in Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth Households**

These estimates are of people in unaccompanied youth households experiencing sheltered homelessness in 2019 and 2020, meaning that they were in an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some time between October 1, 2018, and September 30, 2019 (the 2019 reporting year) or between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020 (the 2020 reporting year).

The estimates are based on the updated reporting platform known as the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) and represent estimates of homelessness for people in unaccompanied youth households who were in shelter any time over the course of a year. The methodology used to develop national estimates changed considerably between 2017 and 2018, shifting from aggregated AHAR table shells to the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) data. While LSA data was used in 2018, 2019 is considered the baseline year, and the estimated number of people experiencing homelessness in 2018 cannot be compared to the estimates of people in 2019 and 2020 due to a slightly different reporting universe. The 2018 estimates are slightly broader, including people who were actively engaged in the homeless services system, but who did not have a bed night in one of the programs. See About this Report for more information.

**EXHIBIT 4.8: 2019 and 2020 Estimates Using 2018 Reporting Universe**

|                      | 2018    | 2019    | 2020   | Number Change<br>2018-2019 | Percent change<br>2018-2019 | Number Change<br>2018-2020 | Percent Change<br>2019-2020 |
|----------------------|---------|---------|--------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of Households | 113,166 | 120,002 | 92,579 | 6,836                      | 6.0%                        | -19,521                    | -17.2%                      |
| Number of People     | 113,330 | 121,216 | 93,645 | 7,886                      | 7.0%                        | -19,685                    | -17.4%                      |

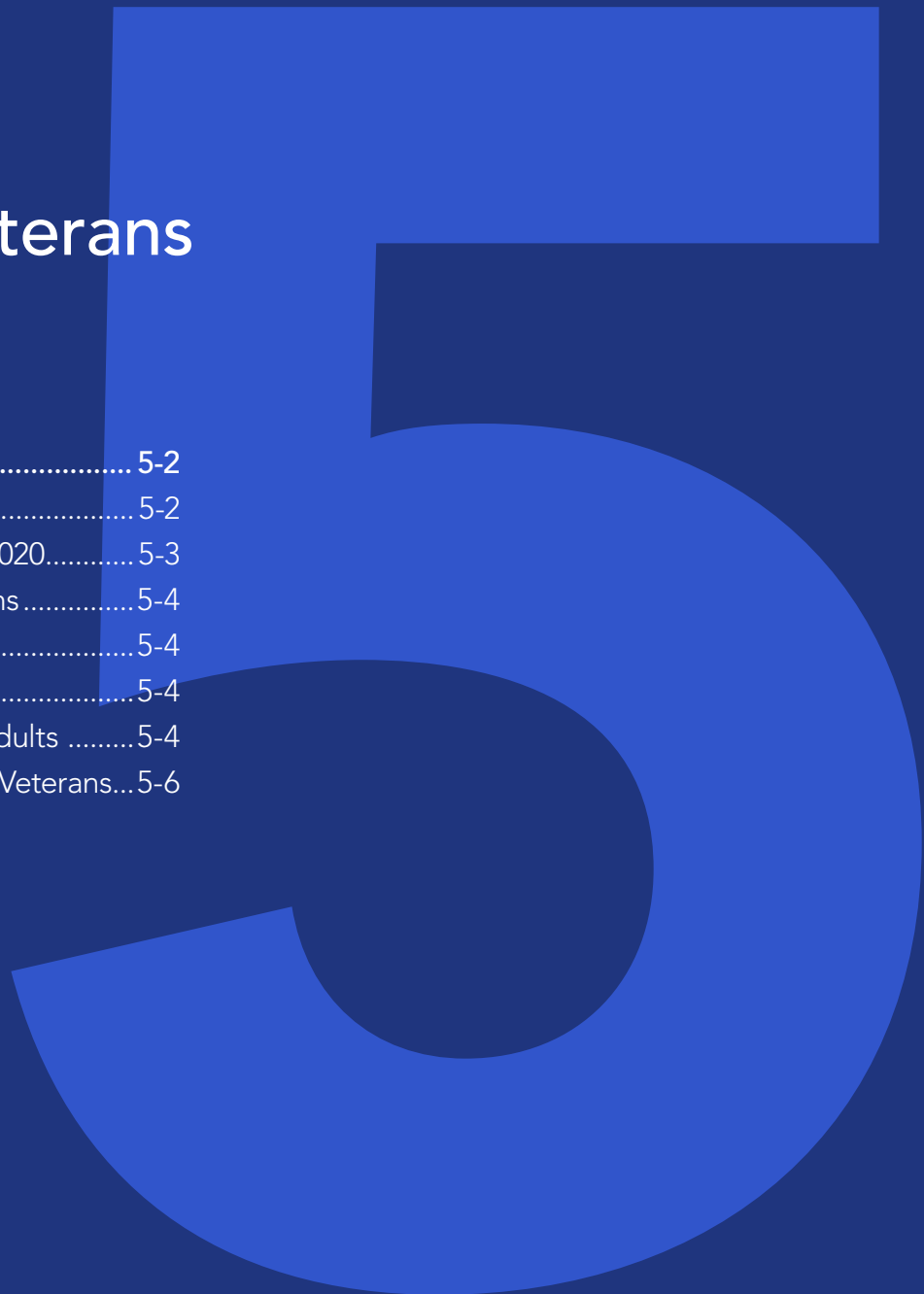


ANYTHING  
HELPS



# 2019-2020 Estimates of Homeless Veterans

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# Estimates of Homeless Veterans

## IN THE UNITED STATES 2019 AND 2020

“[Our state has] made tremendous progress in reducing Veteran Homelessness and increasing the number and variety of housing options available to Veterans who are homeless.”

–Statewide CoC in the Northeast

## Estimates of Homeless Veterans in the United States

About **85,000 veterans** accessed an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some point between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020.

In March 2020, about halfway through the 2020 reporting year, the United States declared a state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the highly contagious nature of the virus and the lack of vaccines at the time, the pandemic 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 increased physical distancing by reducing the number of beds available for occupancy. In some communities, this reduced capacity was reported in HMIS, but in others it was not. In addition, common places where people experiencing homelessness can connect with services providers, including libraries, town halls, and public parks were also closed during much of this period. Estimates of the number of sheltered homeless veterans during the 2020 reporting year should be viewed with caution, as the number could be artificially depressed compared with non-pandemic times, reflecting reduced capacity in some communities, as well as people’s reluctance to enter or remain in shelters.

- About eight percent of all adults experiencing sheltered homelessness and 10 percent of all people in *adult-only* sheltered households were veterans in 2020.
- One out of every 160 veterans in the U.S. experienced sheltered homelessness at some point during 2020.
- Nearly all veterans experiencing homelessness were on their own or without any children present in the household (97%). The characteristics of veterans in the rest of this chapter will focus on veterans in adult-only households.

### Changes between 2019 and 2020

The reporting year for 2019 is October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. An estimated 97,199 veterans were able to access an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some point during that year. Given the change to a new platform known as the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), 2019 has now become the baseline for reporting year-to-year change. The text box at the end of this section compares the estimates for 2018, 2019, and 2020 using the 2018 reporting universe. The data reported in this chapter are based on the reporting universe adopted in 2019.

### EXHIBIT 5.1: One-Year Estimates of Sheltered Veteran Homelessness

2019-2020

|                                    | 2019    |              | 2020   |              |
|------------------------------------|---------|--------------|--------|--------------|
| Number of Veteran Households       | 100,082 |              | 84,308 |              |
| Number of Veterans                 | 100,571 |              | 84,667 |              |
| Veterans by Household Type         | #       | % (of total) | #      | % (of total) |
| Veterans in Adult-Only Households  | 97,199  | 97.1%        | 82,134 | 97.4%        |
| Veterans in Families with Children | 3,132   | 3.1%         | 2,262  | 2.7%         |

Notes: Because people can have multiple stays in shelter over the course of a year and stay in different household configurations, a single veteran can be counted in more than one household type. Because of this overlap, the total number of veteran households may be inflated.

### EXHIBIT 5.2: Change in Estimates of Veteran Households

2019-2020

| Characteristic                | Change in People 2019-2020 |        | Change in Households 2019-2020 |        |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|
|                               | #                          | %      | #                              | %      |
| Staying in Sheltered Programs | -15,774                    | -15.8% | -15,904                        | -15.8% |
| Living in Poverty             | 12,872                     | 1.4%   | 5,859                          | 0.9%   |
| In U.S. Population            | -424,386                   | -3.0%  | -619,295                       | -6.3%  |

## ESTIMATES OF HOMELESS VETERANS IN THE UNITED STATES 2019 AND 2020

The number of veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness in either adult only households or families with children decreased by 16 percent between 2019 and 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic makes it difficult to interpret that drop and should be viewed with caution. Many shelters reduced capacity to meet social distancing guidelines, and people were less likely to seek care in a congregate shelter during the pandemic. In addition, an increase in veteran-specific permanent housing resources provided in response to the pandemic likely contributed to a decline in veteran homelessness between 2019 and 2020.

The total U.S. veteran population dropped during this period, by six percent, but the number of veterans with incomes below the poverty line increased slightly, by less than one percent. Because of the data collection timeframe, Census data for 2020 likely do not capture the full economic impacts of the pandemic.

### Demographic Characteristics among Sheltered Veterans in 2020

- Men accounted for nine in ten veteran heads of adult-only households experiencing sheltered homelessness (93%). The share of heads of adult-only households staying in shelter programs who were women was similar to their share of the total U.S. veteran population
- Sheltered veterans are younger than veterans living in poverty and younger than all U.S. veterans. One in four sheltered veterans was under the age of 45 compared with 13 percent of veterans living in poverty and 11 percent of all veterans.
- A smaller share of sheltered veterans was elderly or near elderly—aged 55 or older—(56%) than among veterans with incomes below the poverty line (77%) or all U.S. veterans (79%). However, the percentage of sheltered veterans in adult-only households who were elderly or near elderly was more than double the percentage of all people in adult only households (56% vs. 27%).
- Veterans who identified as Black or African American comprised more than a third of veteran heads of households experiencing sheltered homelessness (34%). This is three times the share among all U.S. veteran heads of adult-only households (12%), but slightly less than the share of heads of all adult-only households using shelter programs in 2020 (38%).
- Veteran heads of adult-only households experiencing sheltered homelessness were less likely to identify as Hispanic or Latino/a/x than all heads of sheltered adult-only households (8% compared to 15%). However, this is the same as the share of U.S. veteran heads of households living in poverty who were Hispanic (8%).
- A higher percentage of veteran heads of households experiencing sheltered homelessness identified as White and non-Hispanic/Latino/a/x (53%) compared to all heads of adult-only households experiencing homelessness (43%).
- Native American/American Indian and Alaska Native veterans in adult-only households were considerably overrepresented among the sheltered veteran population (4%) compared to their shares of the total veteran population in adult-only households and veterans in poverty (1%).

**EXHIBIT 5.3: Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless Veterans in Adult-Only Households, U.S. Poverty Population, and Total U.S. Population 2019-2020**

|  | 2019               |   |                         | 2020               |   |                         |
|--|--------------------|---|-------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | Sheltered Veterans | U.S. Veteran Population Living in Poverty | U.S. Veteran Population | Sheltered Veterans | U.S. Veteran Population Living in Poverty | U.S. Veteran Population |
| <b>Gender of Veteran Heads of Households</b>     |                    |   |                         |                    |   |                         |
| Female   | 6.8%               | 9.6%                                      | 6.9%                    | 7.0%               | 10.9%                                     | 7.7%                    |
| Male   | 92.9%              | 90.4%                                     | 93.1%                   | 92.6%              | 89.1%                                     | 92.3%                   |
| Transgender                                      | 0.2%               | n/a                                       | n/a                     | 0.3%               | n/a                                       | n/a                     |
| Gender Non-conforming                            | 0.0%               | n/a                                       | n/a                     | 0.0%               | n/a                                       | n/a                     |
| <b>Age of Veterans</b>                           |                    |   |                         |                    |   |                         |
| 18-24  | 1.4%               | 1.9%                                      | 1.1%                    | 1.3%               | 1.6%                                      | 1.3%                    |
| 25-34  | 10.2%              | 5.5%                                      | 4.8%                    | 9.5%               | 5.5%                                      | 4.8%                    |
| 35-44  | 13.1%              | 4.7%                                      | 4.4%                    | 13.8%              | 6.1%                                      | 4.6%                    |
| 45-54  | 21.1%              | 10.4%                                     | 10.6%                   | 19.5%              | 9.8%                                      | 10.0%                   |
| 55-64  | 39.1%              | 27.7%                                     | 19.5%                   | 38.3%              | 26.7%                                     | 19.6%                   |
| 65 and older                                     | 15.1%              | 49.9%                                     | 59.4%                   | 17.7%              | 50.4%                                     | 59.7%                   |
| <b>Ethnicity of Heads of Veteran Households</b>  |                    |   |                         |                    |   |                         |
| Hispanic/Latino                                  | 8.2%               | 7.5%                                      | 5.7%                    | 7.8%               | 8.1%                                      | 6.4%                    |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                          | 91.8%              | 92.5%                                     | 94.3%                   | 92.2%              | 91.9%                                     | 93.6%                   |
| <b>Race of Heads of Veteran Households</b>       |                    |   |                         |                    |   |                         |
| Asian or Asian American                          | 0.4%               | 1.5%                                      | 1.4%                    | 0.5%               | 1.4%                                      | 1.4%                    |
| Black or African American                        | 35.3%              | 20.0%                                     | 11.2%                   | 34.1%              | 20.7%                                     | 11.5%                   |
| Multiple Races                                   | 3.5%               | 2.8%                                      | 1.8%                    | 3.4%               | 6.7%                                      | 5.8%                    |
| Native American/American Indian or Alaska Native | 2.4%               | 1.8%                                      | 0.8%                    | 3.9%               | 1.3%                                      | 0.7%                    |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander              | 0.6%               | 0.3%                                      | 0.2%                    | 0.5%               | 0.3%                                      | 0.1%                    |
| White, Hispanic/Latino/a/x                       | 6.0%               | 5.0%                                      | 4.2%                    | 5.5%               | 2.3%                                      | 1.8%                    |
| White, non-Hispanic/Non-Latino/a/x               | 51.7%              | 67.2%                                     | 79.5%                   | 53.1%              | 64.6%                                     | 76.9%                   |

## ESTIMATES OF HOMELESS VETERANS IN THE UNITED STATES 2019 AND 2020

### Change in Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Veterans

- Between 2019 and 2020, the gender characteristics of veteran heads of adult-only households using shelters did not change.
- The share of sheltered veterans ages 65 and older increased from 15 to 18 percent during that time period.
- The only notable change in the race and ethnicity of sheltered veterans between 2019 and 2020 was for veterans who identified as Native American, increasing from two percent to four percent.

### Geographic Location of Sheltered Veterans in 2020

- In 2020, eight in ten veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness did so in urban areas (80%). This is more than double the percentage of U.S. veteran adult-only households living in poverty in urban areas (35%) and that of all U.S. veteran adult-only households living in urban areas (29%). This overrepresentation of the homeless veterans in urban areas likely reflects several factors, including limited affordable housing options in urban areas and the density of homeless services in those areas.
- While 40 percent of all veteran adult-only households in the United States lived in a suburban community, only 14 percent of the sheltered veteran households were in suburban locations.
- Few veteran households used shelters in rural areas, only seven percent of all veterans using shelters. In contrast, 31 percent of all U.S. veteran households and 33 percent of veteran households living in poverty were in rural areas.

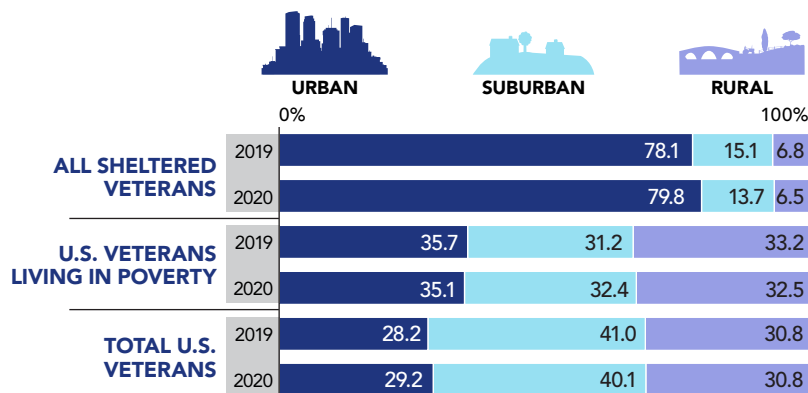
### Changes in Geographic Location Over Time

- There was little change in the geographic location of sheltered veteran households between 2019 and 2020, though the population shifted slightly toward urban areas. The share of the population located in urban areas increased from 78 percent to 80 percent.
- During the same time period, the share of sheltered veteran adult-only households in suburban areas declined slightly, while the share in rural areas remained unchanged.

### Additional Characteristics of Heads of Veterans and Other Adults

- One in five sheltered veterans experienced chronic patterns of homelessness (22%). Urban areas had the highest percent of veterans in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness (23%), followed closely by suburban areas (22%). Seventeen percent of veterans in adult-only households in rural areas had chronic patterns of homelessness.
- More than seven of every ten sheltered veterans in adult-only households had a disability in 2020. This is substantially higher than the share of all adults in sheltered adult-only households, 55 percent.
- In 2020, 11 percent of sheltered veterans in adult-only households were survivors of domestic violence, and two percent were currently fleeing unsafe situations. It is important to note that this data represents survivors of domestic violence who accessed homeless services

EXHIBIT 5.4: Geographic Location of Sheltered Veterans  
2019-2020





## ESTIMATES OF HOMELESS VETERANS IN THE UNITED STATES 2019 AND 2020

that were not operated by victim service providers and should not be considered the full estimate of survivorship among veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness.

- Given the way the data are collected, we only know the percentage of people currently fleeing by geographic category. Three percent of sheltered veterans in both urban and rural locations were currently fleeing unsafe situations. In suburban areas, the rate was one percent.

### Change in Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless Veterans

- Overall, veterans in adult-only households who were able to access shelter programs had higher rates of chronic homelessness, disability, and surviving domestic violence in 2020 than in 2019. As the numbers of people staying in shelter dropped during the pandemic, those who used shelter programs were more vulnerable.
- Between 2019 and 2020, the number of sheltered veterans with chronic patterns of homelessness declined by 10 percent (similar to the decline among all veterans). However, the share of veterans with chronic patterns of homelessness increased slightly from 21 percent to 22 percent.
- The share of sheltered veterans that had a disability also increased between 2019 and 2020, from 70 to 71 percent. However, the number of sheltered veterans with a disability declined by 14 percent.
- Between 2019 and 2020, the number of sheltered veterans who were survivors of domestic violence decreased by four percent, while the share of sheltered veteran households who were survivors of domestic violence increased from 10 to 11 percent. The number of sheltered veterans currently fleeing domestic violence increased by seven percent. This increase in veterans currently fleeing unsafe situations reflected increases in urban areas and rural areas (from 2% to 3% in both geographic types).

### EXHIBIT 5.5: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless Veterans

2019-2020

|  | 2019   |       | 2020   |       | Changes 2019-2020 |        |
|--|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------------------|--------|
|  | #      | %     | #      | %     | #                 | %      |
| <b>Chronic Homeless Status of Heads of Households and Adults</b>                   |        |       |        |       |                   |        |
| Chronically Homeless   | 20,241 | 20.8% | 18,306 | 22.3% | -1,935            | -9.6%  |
| <b>Domestic Violence Survivor Status of Heads of Veteran Households and Adults</b> |        |       |        |       |                   |        |
| Total DV Survivors   | 9,735  | 10.0% | 9,378  | 11.4% | -357              | -3.7%  |
| DV Survivors Currently Fleeing   | 1,752  | 1.8%  | 1,882  | 2.3%  | 130               | 7.4%   |
| DV Survivors Not Currently Fleeing   | 7,004  | 7.2%  | 6,609  | 8.0%  | -395              | -5.6%  |
| DV Survivors with Unknown Fleeing Status   | 979    | 1.0%  | 887    | 1.1%  | -92               | -9.4%  |
| Not DV Survivors   | 81,730 | 84.1% | 69,039 | 84.1% | -12,691           | -15.5% |
| Unknown DV Status  | 5,734  | 5.9%  | 3,717  | 4.5%  | -2,017            | -35.2% |
| <b>Disability Status of Heads of Veteran Heads of Households and Adults</b>        |        |       |        |       |                   |        |
| Disabled   | 67,718 | 69.7% | 58,476 | 71.2% | -9,242            | -13.6% |
| Not Disabled   | 27,904 | 28.7% | 22,455 | 27.3% | -5,449            | -19.5% |
| Disability Status Unknown  | 1,577  | 1.6%  | 1,203  | 1.5%  | -374              | -23.7% |

### EXHIBIT 5.6: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Veterans by Geography

2019-2020

| Characteristic of Households | Urban Veterans |       | Suburban Veterans |       | Rural Veterans |       |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------|-------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
|                              | 2019           | 2020  | 2019              | 2020  | 2019           | 2020  |
| Chronically Homeless         | 21.6%          | 22.9% | 20.1%             | 21.8% | 15.0%          | 17.3% |
| Domestic Violence Survivor   | 1.8%           | 2.5%  | 1.6%              | 1.4%  | 2.0%           | 2.5%  |

## ESTIMATES OF HOMELESS VETERANS IN THE UNITED STATES 2019 AND 2020

**Comparison to 2018 Estimates of Sheltered Veterans**

The estimated number of veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness in 2018 cannot be compared to the estimates of veterans in 2019 and 2020 included in this chapter because of a slightly different reporting universe. The 2018 estimates are slightly broader and include some people who were actively engaged in the homeless services system but did not have a bed night in one of the programs. See About this Report for more information. For comparability, the table below re-creates the 2019 and 2020 estimates using the 2018 reporting universe.

Overall, estimates of veteran homelessness using the 2018 universe shows slower declines between 2018 and 2019, followed by considerable drops between 2019 and 2020.

**EXHIBIT 5.7: 2019 and 2020 Estimates Using 2018 Reporting Universe**

|                              | 2018    | 2019    | 2020   | Number Change<br>2018-2019 | Percent Change<br>2018-2019 | Number Change<br>2018-2020 | Percent Change<br>2018-2020 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of Veteran Households | 106,158 | 100,924 | 85,083 | -5,234                     | -4.9%                       | -21,075                    | -19.9%                      |
| Number of Veterans           | 105,820 | 100,434 | 84,719 | -5,386                     | -5.1%                       | -21,101                    | -19.9%                      |

Note: Data in Exhibit 5.7 are based on people in veteran households active in the homeless assistance system, and not limited to those with at least one bed night in the homeless assistance system.

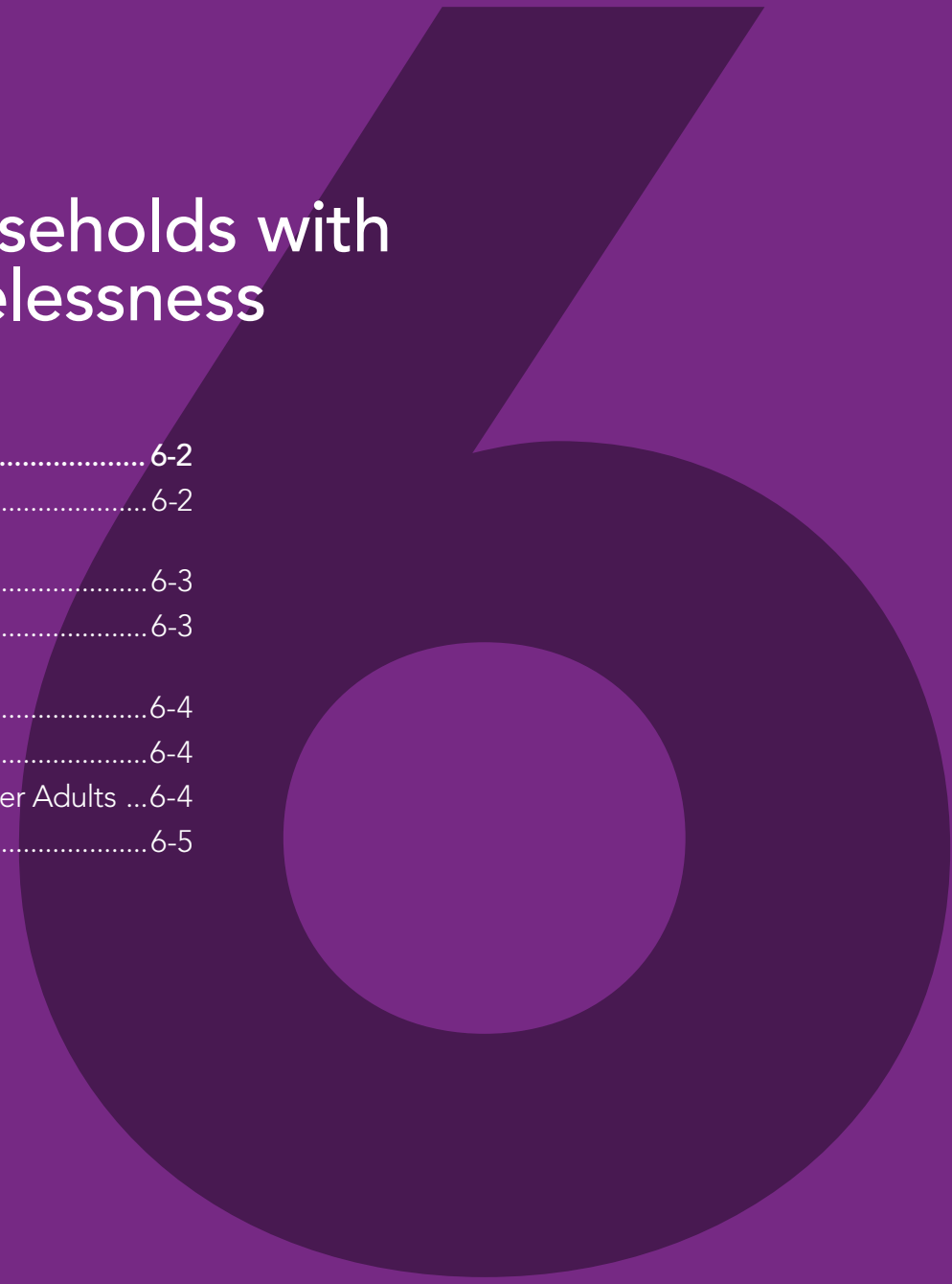




**2019-2020**

# People in Adult-Only Households with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness

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# People in Adult-Only Households with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness

“We were able to get... our [population experiencing unsheltered homelessness] into the Emergency Shelter COVID Hotel so the number of chronically homeless people active in ES is higher.”  
 –Rural CoC in the South

## Estimates of Chronic Homelessness

Across both adult-only households and families, about 195,000 adults who accessed an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at any point from October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020, had chronic patterns of homelessness. A chronic pattern of homelessness means the person has a disability and has been homeless for at least one year within the past three years.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all (94%) were people in adult-only households. This chapter focuses explicitly on those **185,000 people** in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness.

- 184,467 people in adult-only households who used an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at any point from October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020, had chronic patterns of homelessness.
- More than one of every five adults in adult-only households (23%) had a chronic pattern of homelessness.

### Changes between 2019 and 2020

The reporting period for 2019 is October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. An estimated 173,588 people in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness stayed in an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing program at some point during that year. Given the change to a new platform known as the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), 2019 has now become the baseline for reporting year-to-year change. The text box at the end of this section compares the estimates for 2018, 2019, and 2020 using the 2018 reporting universe. The data reported in this chapter are based on the reporting universe adopted in 2019.

While most other populations dropped between 2019 and 2020, the number of people in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness increased by 6 percent, from 173,588 to 184,467, reflecting the general increase in the vulnerability of the population served during the pandemic. The number of people with chronic patterns of homelessness might have increased even more without the drop in shelter capacity that occurred because of the pandemic. In addition to the number of chronically homeless individuals increasing, the share of people in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness increased from 19 percent in 2019 to 22 percent in 2020.

<sup>1</sup> The criteria for at least one year of homelessness can be met either continuously or by at least four episodes of homelessness totaling a year or more. The three-year timeframe over which this length of time is evaluated varies for each person, as it begins three years prior to the person’s last date active during the reporting year. Time spent in an emergency shelter, safe haven, or an unsheltered location counts towards chronic homelessness. Time spent in a transitional housing program does not count.

**EXHIBIT 6.1: One-Year Estimates of Sheltered Chronic Homelessness**  
2019-2020

|  | 2019    | 2020    | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|--|---------|---------|------------------|--------|
|  | #       | #       | #                | %      |
| Chronically Homeless People in Adult-Only Households | 173,588 | 184,467 | 10,879           | 6.3%   |
| Chronically Homeless Adult-Only Households           | 173,179 | 183,411 | 10,232           | 5.9%   |
| All People in Adult-Only Households                  | 935,763 | 824,499 | -111,264         | -11.9% |
| All Adult-Only Households                            | 922,735 | 814,095 | -108,640         | -11.8% |

Note: Data on chronic homelessness were available only for heads of households and other adults. The number of chronically homeless people reported in this table is a subset of all heads of households and adults

## PEOPLE IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHRONIC PATTERNS OF HOMELESSNESS

### Demographic Characteristics of People with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness

- The gender characteristics of people with chronic patterns of homelessness reflect those of all people in adult-only households. Seven in ten people in adult-only households experiencing chronic homelessness were men, and 29 percent were women. Transgender and gender non-conforming people made up less than one percent of people in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness, similar to their share of all heads of adult-only households.
- People experiencing chronic homelessness in adult-only households were older than the general sheltered population in adult-only households. One-third (33%) of all adults with chronic patterns of homelessness were elderly or near elderly (55 or older), compared to 27 percent of all sheltered people in adult-only households. At the other end of the age spectrum for adults, the percentage of youth (between 18 and 24) among people in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness was half that of all people in adult-only households using shelters (5% vs 10%).
- People who identify as Black or African American were slightly underrepresented among the chronically homeless population compared to the sheltered adult-only population (35% vs. 38%), though still overrepresented compared to their share of the total population. People identifying as White and not Hispanic or Latino/a/x made up a slightly higher percentage of people with chronic patterns of homelessness compared with the general sheltered adult-only population (45% vs. 43%).
- People who were Hispanic or Latino/a/x of any race comprised 15 percent of all chronically homeless individuals in adult-only households, the same as their share of all heads of adult-only households.
- People who identified as Native American or Alaska Native accounted for four percent of all heads of chronically homeless adult-only households, similar to their share of heads of all adult-only households. Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders and Asian or Asian Americans also accounted for a similar share of heads of chronically homeless households as they did all adult-only households.

### Changes in Characteristics

- The characteristics of people with chronic patterns of homelessness in the adult-only population did not change between 2019 and 2020. Men made up 70 percent of all chronically homeless individuals in adult-only households in both 2019 and 2020.
- Age shifted only slightly, with a slightly older chronically homeless population in 2020 than in 2019.
- The racial and ethnic demographics of people in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness remained consistent between 2019 and 2020.

### EXHIBIT 6.2: Demographic Characteristics of People in Adult-Only Sheltered Households with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness

2019-2020

|  | 2019  |   | 2020  |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
|  | Sheltered Adults in AO Households with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness | All Sheltered Adults in Adult-Only Households | Sheltered Adults in Adult-Only Households with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness | All Sheltered Adults in Adult-Only Households |
| <b>Gender of Heads of Households<sup>a</sup></b>             |   |   |   |   |
| Female   | 28.6%   | 30.5%   | 29.4%   | 29.4%   |
| Male   | 70.9%   | 69.1%   | 69.9%   | 70.0%   |
| Transgender  | 0.5%  | 0.4%  | 0.6%  | 0.5%  |
| Gender non-conforming  | 0.1%  | 0.1%  | 0.1%  | 0.1%  |
| <b>Age of All People in the Household<sup>b</sup></b>        |   |   |   |   |
| 18-24  | 5.7%  | 11.0%   | 5.2%  | 10.1%   |
| 25-34  | 15.1%   | 20.6%   | 15.9%   | 20.3%   |
| 35-44  | 19.7%   | 20.6%   | 20.6%   | 21.1%   |
| 45-54  | 26.6%   | 22.6%   | 25.3%   | 21.9%   |
| 55-64  | 26.3%   | 19.7%   | 25.6%   | 20.4%   |
| 65 and Older   | 6.7%  | 5.5%  | 7.3%  | 6.2%  |
| <b>Ethnicity of Chronically Homeless Heads of Households</b> |   |   |   |   |
| Hispanic/Latino  | 14.7%   | 14.2%   | 14.8%   | 14.9%   |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                                      | 85.3%   | 85.8%   | 85.2%   | 85.1%   |
| <b>Race of Chronically Homeless Heads of Households</b>      |   |   |   |   |
| Asian or Asian American                                      | 0.7%  | 0.7%  | 0.7%  | 0.9%  |
| Black or African American                                    | 35.3%   | 38.7%   | 34.6%   | 37.8%   |
| Multiple Races   | 4.4%  | 3.3%  | 5.1%  | 3.7%  |
| Native American/American Indian or Alaska Native             | 3.6%  | 3.1%  | 3.9%  | 3.5%  |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander                          | 0.7%  | 0.2%  | 0.6%  | 0.2%  |
| White, Hispanic/Latino                                       | 10.9%   | 9.8%  | 10.4%   | 9.9%  |
| White, non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                               | 44.3%   | 43.5%   | 44.7%   | 43.3%   |

<sup>a</sup> Data on characteristics excludes people for whom the characteristic is missing/unknown.

<sup>b</sup> Data on age is based on all people in adult-only households. Gender, ethnicity, and race are based on the heads of household.

## PEOPLE IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHRONIC PATTERNS OF HOMELESSNESS

### Geographic Distribution of People with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness

- Eight in ten adult-only households experiencing chronic homelessness were in urban areas (81%), higher than the share of all adult-only households experiencing sheltered homelessness (79%).
- Rural areas accounted for a smaller share of adult-only households experiencing chronic homelessness than of all sheltered adult-only households (5% vs. 7%).
- Suburban areas accounted for approximately 14 percent of the chronically homeless population, the same share as for all adult-only households using shelters.

### Changes in Geographic Distribution

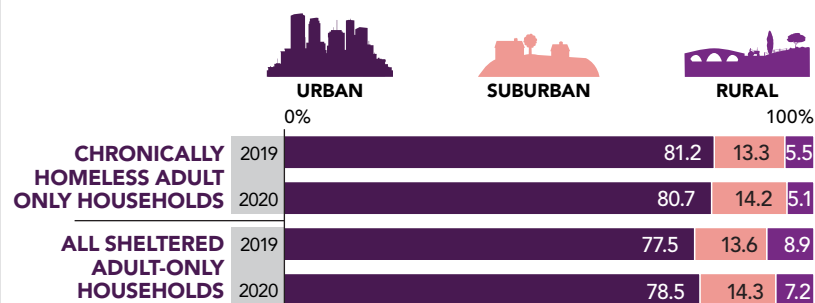
- Between 2019 and 2020, the share of adult-only households experiencing chronic homelessness located in suburban areas increased from 13 percent to 14 percent, while the share in rural areas decreased from 6 percent to 5 percent.
- Urban areas continued to account for the largest share of adult-only households experiencing chronic homelessness, 81 percent in both 2019 and 2020.

### Additional Characteristics of Heads of Households and Other Adults

- In 2020, ten percent of chronically homeless people in adult-only households (18,220 people) were veterans. The percentage of all chronically homeless people in adult-only households who were veterans was about ten percent across geographic areas.
- Survivors of domestic violence made up 27 percent of all chronically homeless people in adult-only households staying in shelters in 2020 (48,958 people). This is considerably higher than the share of all people in adult-only households who were survivors of domestic violence (18%). Approximately seven percent of chronically homeless adults were currently fleeing domestic violence in 2020. It is important to note that this data represents survivors of domestic violence who accessed homeless services that were not operated by victim service providers and should not be considered the full estimate of survivorship among people experiencing chronic homelessness who accessed the sheltered system.
- Given the way data are reported, it is not possible to understand the percentage of adults in each geographic category who are survivors of domestic violence – regardless of fleeing status. However, data are available on the share of people *currently fleeing* domestic violence by geography. Rural areas had a higher rate of chronically homeless people currently fleeing unsafe situations (9%) than urban areas (8%) or suburban areas (5%).

**EXHIBIT 6.3: Geographic Location of Adult Only Households with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness and All Sheltered Adult Only Households**

2019-2020



**EXHIBIT 6.4: Additional Characteristics of Sheltered Adult-Only Households with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness**

2019-2020

|  | 2019    |       | 2020    |       | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|--|---------|-------|---------|-------|------------------|--------|
|  | #       | %     | #       | %     | #                | %      |
| <b>Veteran Status of Chronically Homeless Heads of Households</b>                    |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Veteran  | 20,223  | 11.7% | 18,220  | 10.0% | -2,003           | -9.9%  |
| Non-Veteran  | 151,155 | 87.8% | 163,251 | 89.5% | 12,096           | 8.0%   |
| <b>Domestic Violence Survivor Status of Chronically Homeless Heads of Households</b> |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Total DV Survivors   | 41,863  | 24.3% | 48,958  | 26.9% | 7,095            | 16.9%  |
| DV Survivors Currently Fleeing   | 10,663  | 6.2%  | 13,187  | 7.2%  | 2,524            | 23.7%  |
| DV Survivors Not Currently Fleeing   | 28,678  | 16.7% | 33,317  | 18.3% | 4,639            | 16.2%  |
| DV Survivors with Unknown Fleeing Status   | 2,522   | 1.5%  | 2,454   | 1.3%  | -68              | -2.7%  |
| Not DV Survivors   | 124,547 | 72.4% | 128,317 | 70.4% | 3,770            | 3.0%   |
| Unknown DV Status  | 5,731   | 3.3%  | 5,050   | 2.8%  | -681             | -11.9% |

## PEOPLE IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHRONIC PATTERNS OF HOMELESSNESS

### Changes in Characteristics

- Between 2019 and 2020, the share of people in adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness who were veterans decreased from 12 percent to ten percent. The number of chronically homeless adults who were veterans also declined, by ten percent. The percentage of chronically homeless adults who were veterans declined across geographic categories, with the largest drop occurring in suburban areas (13% in 2019 to 10% in 2020).
- In 2020, the number of chronically homeless individuals who were survivors of domestic violence was 17 percent higher than it was in 2019. The share of heads of adult-only households with chronic patterns of homelessness who were survivors of domestic violence also increased, from 24 percent to 27 percent. The number of people currently fleeing domestic violence increased by 24 percent between 2019 and 2020.

**EXHIBIT 6.5: Characteristics of Chronically Homeless Adult-Only Households by Geography 2019-2020**

|                            | Urban Households |       | Suburban Households |      | Rural Households |      |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|------|------------------|------|
|                            | 2019             | 2020  | 2019                | 2020 | 2019             | 2020 |
| Veteran                    | 11.7%            | 10.2% | 12.8%               | 9.5% | 10.5%            | 9.9% |
| Domestic Violence Survivor | 6.2%             | 7.6%  | 5.0%                | 5.1% | 8.3%             | 8.5% |

### Comparison to 2018 Estimates of People in Sheltered Adult-Only Households

The estimates are based on the updated reporting platform known as the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) and represent estimates of chronic homelessness for people who were in shelter any time over the course of a year. These data take advantage of the system-use data available in HMIS and use data from a three-year period to determine whether a household's pattern of homelessness has been chronic. The estimated number of people experiencing chronic homelessness in 2018 cannot be compared to the estimates of people in 2019 and 2020 due to a slightly different reporting universe. The 2018 estimates are slightly broader, including people who were actively engaged in the homeless services system, but who did not have a bed night in one of the programs. See About this Report for more information.

Chronic homelessness among people in adult-only households declined between 2018 and 2019 and increased between 2019 and 2020.

**EXHIBIT 6.6: 2019 and 2020 Estimates of People with Chronic Patterns of Homelessness Using 2018 Reporting Universe**

|  | 2018    | 2019    | 2020    | Number Change 2018-2019 | Percent Change 2018-2019 | Number Change 2018-2020 | Percent Change 2018-2020 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Number of Chronically Homeless Adult Only Households           | 194,304 | 173,179 | 183,411 | -21,125                 | -10.9%                   | -10,893                 | -5.6%                    |
| Number of People in Chronically Homeless Adult Only Households | 194,467 | 174,149 | 185,169 | -20,155                 | -10.4%                   | -9,135                  | -4.7%                    |

The universe for the 2018 estimates is people and households who were active during the report period, whether in residence or not (i.e., had at least one bed night during the reporting period). For the 2019 and 2020 estimates, it was possible to limit the estimates just to those people and households who were active in residence—i.e., had at least one bed night—during the report period. This exhibit provides comparable data between 2018 and 2019/2020. The remainder of the report uses just the “active in residence” definition.



**2019-2020**

# People Using Rapid Re-Housing Programs

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# People Using Rapid Re-Housing Programs

IN 2019 AND 2020

## Estimates of People and Households Using Rapid Re-Housing Programs in 2020

Rapid Re-housing (RRH) programs help people leave homelessness by providing time-limited rent subsidies in permanent housing units that is matched with optional supportive services. In many communities, these services are tailored to meet the individual needs of households. However, communities decide both the services available to households and the amount of time attached to the RRH subsidies. While the rent subsidy is temporary, the housing is not. When the rent subsidy ends, the household may be able to stay in the housing unit and pay rent from its earnings or other resources. RRH has become an important component of the homeless services system across the United States and is heavily used to help individuals and families leave emergency shelters for permanent housing. Data presented in this chapter are limited to people who are living in a rented housing unit with the assistance of rapid rehousing funding. People or households that are enrolled in rapid rehousing but have not moved into a unit yet are excluded from this analysis.

Almost **242,00 people** in about **123,000 households** were participating in an RRH program and using its rent subsidies at some time between October 1, 2019, and September 30, 2021.

In March 2020, about halfway through the 2020 reporting year, the United States declared a state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, facility-based emergency shelters with congregate settings reduced the number of beds available for occupancy. In some communities, this may have resulted in reduced demand for RRH because of the smaller shelter population due to reduced access to shelter programs. In addition, with staff capacity strained because of the pandemic, communities may have focused on immediate measures to prevent spread of the virus rather than helping people search for permanent housing. Existing RRH resources may have become available for new households more slowly, as households already in the program needed more help for longer periods of time. Ending in September 2020, these estimates do not reflect people placed in permanent housing through additional resources allocated in response to the pandemic. Those resources largely were not used until after the reporting period. Given these factors, estimates of people and households using rapid rehousing subsidies in 2020 should be viewed with extreme caution.

- Almost two-thirds (65%) of all people who used RRH in 2020 were people in families with children (158,132 people).
- Just over a third of RRH residents (85,531 people) were in adult-only households. Fewer than one percent were in child-only households.

“Our ability to get people housed through rapid re-housing slowed down significantly for our rapid re-housing case managers during the first part of 2020 due to COVID-19. During the second half of 2020 [not covered by the 2020 reporting period] we dramatically increased the number of people housed through rapid-re-housing.”

—Suburban CoC in the South

### EXHIBIT 7.1: One-Year Estimates of People Using Rapid Re-Housing Subsidies

2019-2020

|  | 2019    |       | 2020    |       | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|--|---------|-------|---------|-------|------------------|--------|
|  | #       | %     | #       | %     | #                | %      |
| Households in RRH programs                         | 127,058 | 100%  | 122,787 | 100%  | -4,271           | -3.4%  |
| People in RRH Programs                             | 260,209 | 100%  | 241,783 | 100%  | -18,426          | -7.1%  |
| <b>People in RRH by Household Type<sup>a</sup></b> |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| People in Adult-Only Households                    | 83,651  | 32.1% | 83,531  | 34.4% | -120             | -0.1%  |
| People in Family Households                        | 176,558 | 67.7% | 158,132 | 65.2% | -18,426          | -10.4% |

<sup>a</sup>The sum of people by household type is slightly different than the total number of people because people may be counted in more than one household type over the course of a year. Additionally, a very small share of RRH residents (<1%) were under the age of 18 and in a child-only household.

### EXHIBIT 7.2: Changes in Estimates of Homelessness, Users of Rapid Re-housing, Households in Poverty, and All U.S. Households

2019-2020

|                               | Change in People 2019-2020 |              | Change in Households 2019-2020 |              |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
|                               | #                          | %            | #                              | %            |
| Staying in Shelter Programs   | -203,150                   | -14.0%       | -142,324                       | -12.9%       |
| <b>Using Rapid Re-Housing</b> | <b>-18,426</b>             | <b>-7.1%</b> | <b>-4,271</b>                  | <b>-3.4%</b> |
| Living in Poverty             | -1,042,533                 | -2.6%        | -163,003                       | -1.0%        |
| In U.S. Population            | 1,265,292                  | 0.4%         | 1,525,584                      | 1.2%         |



## PEOPLE USING RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS IN 2019 AND 2020

## Changes between 2019 and 2020

- Between 2019 and 2020, the number of households using RRH programs declined by three percent. Most of the decline was for families with children, so the drop in the number of people was much larger, seven percent. This mirrored a drop in the number of families using shelters, and both trends may reflect in part the safety net measures implemented in response to the pandemic, which focused on families with children. In addition, some communities reported that eviction moratoria and other responses to the pandemic reduced turnover in low-cost housing and made it difficult for people to find housing units in which to use their RRH subsidies.
- The number of people in adult-only households using RRH programs was essentially unchanged between 2019 and 2020, about 83,000 people in both years.

## Demographic Characteristics of People Living in Rapid Rehousing

- More than half of the households using RRH to subsidize their permanent housing in 2020 had female heads (53%). This is higher than the percentage of heads of households using shelters who are women (38%) and reflects the relatively greater use of the RRH program by families.
- The relatively greater use of RRH for families is also reflected in the age distribution of people using RRH, 40 percent of whom were children compared with 21 percent of people staying in shelters in 2020. People 55 and older were a smaller share of people in the RRH program than of those staying in shelter (13% vs. 18%).
- Sixteen percent of heads of RRH households were Hispanic/Latino/a/x, similar to their share of households using shelters in 2020.
- The share of Black or African American heads of households in RRH was slightly higher (42%) than their share of households using shelters (40%).
- White, non-Hispanic/non-Latino heads of household accounted for a slightly smaller share of RRH households (39%) compared to heads of households in shelter programs (40%).
- Native Americans accounted for a slightly lower share of RRH households (2%) than their share of households using shelters (3%).
- Despite the relatively heavy use of RRH for families, a majority of households using RRH (57%) consisted of just one person. However, 28 percent were households with three or more people.
- The families using RRH were larger than families using shelters. For example, in 2020, 30 percent of RRH households had three or more children compared with 27 percent of families using shelter programs.

## Changes in Characteristics of Households Living in Rapid Rehousing

- The percentage of adult only households using RRH programs increased somewhat between 2019 and 2020, from 32 to 34 percent. That was reflected in a small increase in male heads of household and a small drop in the percentage of children.
- The race and ethnicity of RRH users changed little between 2019 and 2020, with a slight drop in households identifying as Black and a slight increase in households identifying as Hispanic.

**EXHIBIT 7.3: Demographic Characteristics of Households Using Rapid Re-Housing vs. Staying in Shelters 2019-2020**

|   | 2019                             |                     | 2020                             |                     |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
|   | Using Rapid Re-Housing Subsidies | Staying in Shelters | Using Rapid Re-Housing Subsidies | Staying in Shelters |
| <b>Gender of Heads of Households<sup>a</sup></b>        |                                  |                     |                                  |                     |
| Female  | 53.7%                            | 38.9%               | 52.6%                            | 37.7%               |
| Male  | 45.8%                            | 60.7%               | 46.9%                            | 61.8%               |
| Gender non-conforming                                   | 0.1%                             | 0.1%                | 0.1%                             | 0.1%                |
| Transgender   | 0.4%                             | 0.3%                | 0.4%                             | 0.4%                |
| <b>Age of All People in the Household</b>               |                                  |                     |                                  |                     |
| Under 18  | 42.3%                            | 22.7%               | 40.4%                            | 21.3%               |
| 18-24   | 8.0%                             | 9.7%                | 9.1%                             | 9.3%                |
| 25-34   | 15.5%                            | 18.8%               | 15.1%                            | 18.9%               |
| 35-44   | 12.4%                            | 16.5%               | 12.7%                            | 17.2%               |
| 45-54   | 9.6%                             | 15.6%               | 9.7%                             | 15.5%               |
| 55-64   | 9.4%                             | 12.9%               | 9.7%                             | 13.7%               |
| 65 and older  | 2.8%                             | 3.6%                | 3.3%                             | 4.2%                |
| <b>Ethnicity of Heads of Households</b>                 |                                  |                     |                                  |                     |
| Hispanic/Latino   | 13.5%                            | 15.8%               | 15.5%                            | 16.2%               |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                                 | 86.5%                            | 84.5%               | 84.5%                            | 83.8%               |
| <b>Race of Heads of Households</b>                      |                                  |                     |                                  |                     |
| Asian or Asian American                                 | 0.6%                             | 0.7%                | 0.6%                             | 0.8%                |
| Black or African American                               | 43.4%                            | 40.5%               | 41.6%                            | 40.0%               |
| Multiple Races  | 4.3%                             | 3.5%                | 4.8%                             | 3.8%                |
| Native American/<br>American Indian or Alaska<br>Native | 2.3%                             | 3.0%                | 2.3%                             | 3.3%                |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific<br>Islander                  | 0.7%                             | 0.9%                | 0.8%                             | 0.9%                |
| White, Hispanic/Latino                                  | 9.8%                             | 10.8%               | 11.0%                            | 10.7%               |
| White, non-Hispanic/<br>Non-Latino                      | 38.9%                            | 40.6%               | 39.0%                            | 40.4%               |

<sup>a</sup>Data on characteristics excludes people for whom the characteristic is missing/unknown.



## PEOPLE USING RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS IN 2019 AND 2020

### Length of Time in Rapid Rehousing

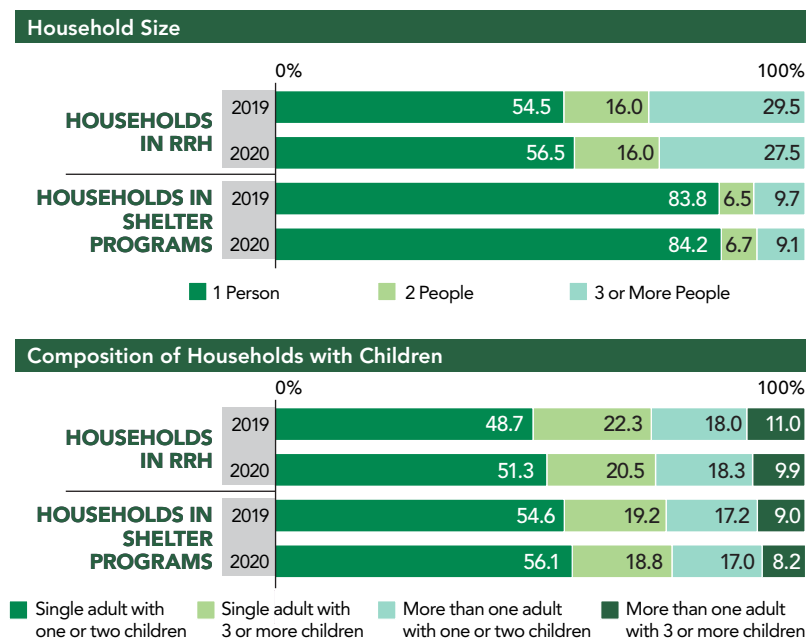
Rapid Re-housing programs provide time-limited rent subsidies rarely lasting more than two years and sometimes for a much shorter period. The length of the subsidy is locally determined. Households in the RRH program during 2020 included those who started the program after October 1, 2019, as well as households who had started receiving the RRH rent subsidy earlier. Some households using RRH during 2020 would remain in the program after September 30, 2021.

- Most households using RRH during the 2020 reporting period had been in the program less than a year (83%). More than one-third of households were in the RRH for less than three months as of the end of the reporting period, and 55 percent had been in the program for less than six months.
- About 28 percent of RRH households in 2020 had been in the program for between six and twelve months, and 15 percent for between one and two years.

### Change in Length of Time Using Rapid Rehousing Subsidies

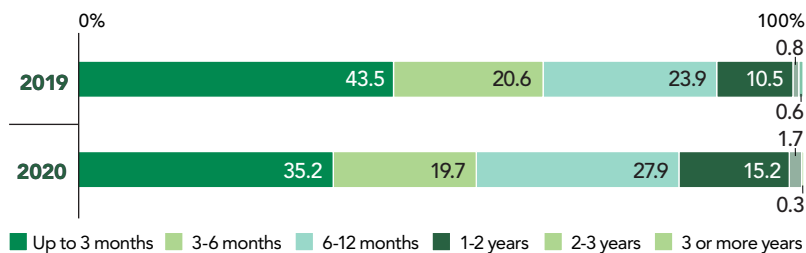
- Between 2019 and 2020, the share of households using RRH for three months or less dropped considerably, from 44 percent to 35 percent. But again, these changes should be viewed with some caution as these data likely reflect reduced placements into RRH during the six months of the reporting period that included the COVID-19 pandemic.
- At the same time, the share of RRH households that remained in RRH for longer periods increased. Households using RRH for between 6 and 12 months increased from 24 percent in 2019 to 28 percent in 2020. The share that was in the program between one and two years increased from 11 to 15 percent.

**EXHIBIT 7.4: Household Composition of People Using Rapid Re-Housing Subsidies 2019-2020**



Note: Data on household size excludes households where the size was unknown.

**EXHIBIT 7.5: Length of Use of Rapid Re-Housing Subsidies 2019-2020**



## PEOPLE USING RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS IN 2019 AND 2020

## Geographic Location of Rapid Rehousing Households

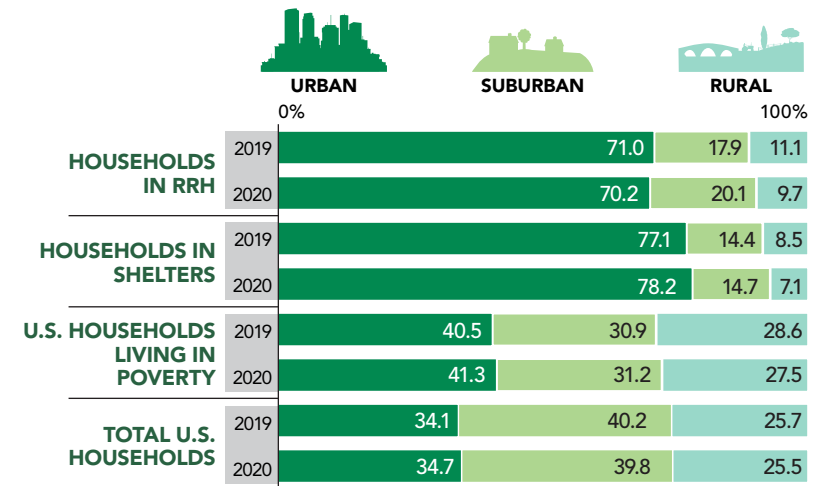
- Households in the RRH program were less likely to be in urban areas and more likely to be in suburban or rural areas than households using shelter programs. In 2020, 70 percent of households using RRH were in urban areas, notably lower than the percentage of people using shelters in urban areas (78%).
- One in five RRH households were in suburban areas in 2020 compared with 15 percent of households using shelter programs. Ten percent of RRH households were in rural areas compared with seven percent of households in shelters. This may reflect a greater use of RRH in areas with limited shelter programs.

## Change in Geographic Distribution between 2019 and 2020

- Both the number and the share of RRH households living in suburban areas increased between 2019 and 2020. The number of households using RRH subsidies in suburban areas increased by 9 percent, and the share increased from 18 percent of RRH households to 20 percent.
- Meanwhile, both the numbers and shares of RRH households in urban and rural areas declined.

## EXHIBIT 7.6: Geographic Location of Households

2019-2020



## PEOPLE USING RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS IN 2019 AND 2020

### Additional Characteristics of People in Rapid Rehousing Programs

- In 2020, 15 percent of heads of households and other adults using RRH programs had chronic patterns of homelessness before using RRH to rent permanent housing. The rate of patterns of chronic homelessness among adults in RRH programs was highest in urban areas, where 18 percent of all adults in RRH had been chronically homeless. Sixteen percent of adults using RRH in suburban areas had chronic patterns of homelessness, as had 12 percent of RRH adults in rural areas.
- More than one of every five adults using RRH in subsidies in 2020 was a veteran (21%). The high percentage of veterans in RRH programs reflects the considerable RRH resources directed to veterans through the Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families (SSVF) program. More detail on SSVF is at the end of this chapter.
- In 2020, 27 percent of adults in RRH were survivors of domestic violence, and 10 percent were currently fleeing unsafe situations. It is important to note that the data represent survivors of domestic violence who accessed rapid rehousing that was not operated by victim service providers and should not be considered the full estimate of survivorship among people served in rapid rehousing programs. Given the way data are reported, it is not possible to show the percentage of adults in each geographic category who are survivors of domestic violence. However, data are available on the share of adults *currently fleeing* domestic violence by geography. In 2020, rural areas accounted for the highest share of adults in RRH who were currently fleeing unsafe situations (15%).
- More than half of heads of households and other adults using RRH subsidies in 2020 had disabilities, 52 percent. This is slightly higher than the 50 percent of adults using shelter programs.

### Change in Additional Characteristics of Rapid Re-Housing Households

- The rates at which heads of households and other adults using RRH had been chronically homeless, had disabilities, and were domestic violence survivors changed slightly between 2019 and 2020, with each share increasing by less than one percentage point.
- The share of adults in RRH who were veterans dropped slightly, from 22 percent in 2019 to 21 percent in 2020.
- The extent to which adults in RRH had chronic patterns of homelessness declined between 2019 and 2020. The time spent in rapid rehousing—a permanent housing program—reduces the maximum amount of time within the three-year period over which chronic patterns of homelessness are measured that a person could have been homeless. Thus, the increase in the share of RRH households who used their rent subsidies for longer periods of time may have contributed to the overall drop in the share of RRH users with patterns of chronic homelessness. However, the share of adults using RRH subsidies in rural areas who had chronic patterns of homelessness increased from nine percent in 2019 to 12 percent in 2020.
- The share of adults using RRH subsidies who were survivors of domestic violence remained consistent between 2019 and 2020, while the number declined by three percent. Similarly, the share of adults in RRH that were currently fleeing domestic violence was largely unchanged, and the number declined by one percent. The rates of adults who were currently

**EXHIBIT 7.7: Additional Characteristics of People Using Rapid Re-Housing Subsidies 2019-2020**

|  | 2019    |       | 2020    |       | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|--|---------|-------|---------|-------|------------------|--------|
|  | #       | %     | #       | %     | #                | %      |
| <b>Chronic Homeless Status of Heads of Households and Adults</b>                 |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Chronically Homeless   | 22,557  | 15.0% | 21,766  | 15.1% | -791             | -3.5%  |
| Not Chronically Homeless or Chronic Status Unknown                               | 127,397 | 85.0% | 122,287 | 84.9% | -5,110           | -4.0%  |
| <b>Veteran Status of Heads of Households and Other Adults</b>                    |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Veteran  | 33,413  | 22.3% | 30,456  | 21.2% | -2,957           | -8.8%  |
| Non-Veteran  | 116,102 | 77.5% | 112,966 | 78.5% | -3,136           | -2.7%  |
| Veteran Status Unknown   | 343     | 0.2%  | 476     | 0.3%  | 133              | 38.8%  |
| <b>Domestic Violence Survivor Status of Heads of Households and Other Adults</b> |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Total DV Survivors   | 39,705  | 26.5% | 38,709  | 26.9% | -996             | -2.5%  |
| DV Survivors Currently Fleeing   | 14,288  | 9.5%  | 14,136  | 9.8%  | -152             | -1.1%  |
| DV Survivors Not Currently Fleeing   | 23,953  | 16.0% | 23,176  | 16.1% | -777             | -3.2%  |
| DV Survivors with Unknown Fleeing Status   | 1,463   | 1.0%  | 1,397   | 1.0%  | -66              | -4.5%  |
| Not DV Survivors   | 100,866 | 67.3% | 101,608 | 70.5% | 742              | 0.7%   |
| Unknown DV Status  | 9,383   | 6.3%  | 3,735   | 2.6%  | -5,648           | -60.2% |
| <b>Disability Status of Heads of Households and Other Adults</b>                 |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Disabled   | 77,292  | 51.5% | 75,339  | 52.3% | -1,953           | -2.5%  |
| Not Disabled   | 72,136  | 48.1% | 67,902  | 47.1% | -4,234           | -5.9%  |
| Disability Status Unknown  | 526     | 0.4%  | 812     | 0.6%  | 286              | 54.4%  |

**EXHIBIT 7.8: Characteristics of Rapid Re-Housing Households by Geography 2019-2020**

| Characteristics of Households       | Urban Households |       | Suburban Households |       | Rural Households |       |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                                     | 2019             | 2020  | 2019                | 2020  | 2019             | 2020  |
| Chronically Homeless Adult          | 18.9%            | 18.1% | 14.9%               | 15.7% | 9.1%             | 11.7% |
| Veterans                            | 28.4%            | 26.7% | 22.5%               | 21.8% | 18.3%            | 16.4% |
| Currently Fleeing Domestic Violence | 10.9%            | 11.4% | 9.4%                | 9.3%  | 14.7%            | 14.9% |

## PEOPLE USING RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS IN 2019 AND 2020

fleeing unsafe situations were unchanged, overall and across types of geographic areas.

### Destination at Program Exit for Rapid Re-Housing Households

In 2020, more than half of family households (56%) and nearly two thirds of adult-only households (62%) who used RRH assistance to subsidize their permanent housing left the RRH program during the reporting period. This means that their subsidy ended, but not necessarily that they moved from the housing unit the RRH program subsidized. For most RRH households, LSA data include their housing status at the time of exit.

- Nearly all households that left the RRH program remained in permanent housing (87% of adult-only households and 91% of family households). For most households, this meant living in permanent housing without a subsidy (46% of adult-only and 62% of family households). However, about a quarter of all households that left the RRH program were living in permanent housing with a subsidy.
- A very small percentage of households that left RRH went directly to homelessness – only two percent of adult-only households and one percent of family households.
- Approximately seven percent of family households and nine percent of adult-only households were doubled up with family or friends on either a permanent or a temporary basis, after leaving the RRH program.

### Changes in Exit Status and Destination at Exit

- Between 2019 and 2020, the percentage of households that stopped using RRH declined. In 2019, 61 percent of family households left the RRH program during the reporting period and did not return to RRH during that period. This percentage dropped to 56 percent in 2020. Similar drops occurred for adult-only households—from 70 percent leaving RRH during the 2019 reporting period to 62 percent in 2020.
- For both adult-only households and family households who left RRH, the pattern of housing status after leaving RRH did not change between 2019 and 2020. So while fewer households stopped receiving RRH subsidies in 2020, their shares in permanent housing or in homelessness remained the same.

### EXHIBIT 7.9: Exit Status and Destination of Exit for Households Using RRH

|  | Adult-Only Households |       | Family Households |       |
|--|-----------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
|  | 2019                  | 2020  | 2019              | 2020  |
| Still in RRH on the last day of reporting period     | 30.2%                 | 37.6% | 39.4%             | 44.0% |
| Left RRH during reporting period                     | 69.8%                 | 62.4% | 60.6%             | 56.0% |
| <b>Housing Status for Households that Exited RRH</b> |                       |       |                   |       |
| Permanent supportive housing (PSH)                   | 3.4%                  | 2.9%  | 3.2%              | 1.4%  |
| Other types of permanent housing                     | 86.8%                 | 86.7% | 89.7%             | 91.4% |
| Permanent housing, no subsidy                        | 48.6%                 | 46.4% | 60.3%             | 61.7% |
| Permanent housing, with subsidy                      | 32.2%                 | 33.5% | 24.2%             | 25.2% |
| Doubled up with friends or family (permanent)        | 6.0%                  | 6.8%  | 5.2%              | 4.5%  |
| Temporary housing                                    | 2.1%                  | 2.7%  | 2.5%              | 2.7%  |
| Doubled up with friends or family (temporary)        | 1.8%                  | 2.2%  | 2.2%              | 2.4%  |
| Other temporary housing                              | 0.3%                  | 0.5%  | 0.3%              | 0.3%  |
| Homeless   | 2.9%                  | 2.4%  | 1.6%              | 1.1%  |
| Sheltered homeless                                   | 1.9%                  | 1.6%  | 1.2%              | 0.9%  |
| Unsheltered homeless                                 | 1.0%                  | 0.9%  | 0.4%              | 0.2%  |
| Institutional setting                                | 2.0%                  | 2.0%  | 0.6%              | 0.6%  |
| Unknown housing status                               | 2.2%                  | 2.3%  | 2.2%              | 2.6%  |
| Deceased   | 0.6%                  | 0.9%  | 0.1%              | 0.2%  |

## PEOPLE USING RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS IN 2019 AND 2020

**Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families (SSVF)**

In 2010, Congress enacted the SSVF program, which is implemented by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). SSVF offers RRH or homelessness prevention assistance to veteran households experiencing housing crises. Like RRH with other sources of funding, the RRH component of SSVF provides short-term subsidies in permanent rental housing to households leaving homelessness. SSVF RRH has served an increasing number of veterans each year since the program was implemented in FY 2012. The information in this section comes from the VA's SSVF-HMIS Repository and not from the Longitudinal Systems Analysis platform of HMIS data on which the rest of this chapter is based. This section provides additional information on the characteristics of the people served by the RRH component of SSVF who were veterans and also shows where they were staying after they stopped receiving RRH rent subsidies.

The SSVF program primarily served veterans in households without children in 2019. Eighty-nine percent were in households without children, and most were living alone. A similar percentage were men. About two thirds had disabilities, and 16 percent had chronic patterns of homelessness.

About 71 percent of the veterans served by SSVF RRH in 2019 had exited the program by the end of the year. Of those veterans who stopped receiving the SSVF RRH subsidy, about three quarters (74%) were in permanent housing, which may have been the same housing in which they used the RRH rent subsidy, or they may have moved to a different permanent housing unit. Of veterans who stopped receiving SSVF RRH rent subsidies, 13 percent returned to homelessness, about evenly split between shelters and unsheltered locations.<sup>1</sup>

**EXHIBIT 7.10: Demographic Characteristics of Veterans Served in SSVF Rapid Re-Housing Programs FY 2019**

| Total Veterans Served                 | 100.00% |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Household Type</b>                 |         |
| Without children                      | 89.1%   |
| With children                         | 10.9%   |
| <b>Gender</b>                         |         |
| Male                                  | 88.2%   |
| Female                                | 11.4%   |
| Transgender                           | 0.3%    |
| Gender non-conforming                 | 0.0%    |
| <b>Disability Status</b>              |         |
| Disabled                              | 64.6%   |
| Not disabled                          | 35.4%   |
| <b>Chronic Homelessness Status</b>    |         |
| Chronically homeless                  | 15.8%   |
| Not chronically homeless              | 84.2%   |
| <b>Destination at Exit</b>            |         |
| Permanent destination                 | 74.4%   |
| Homeless situation                    | 13.4%   |
| Other destination (including unknown) | 9.3%    |
| Institutional destination             | 2.4%    |
| Deceased                              | 7.4%    |

Source: SSVF-HMIS Repository Data

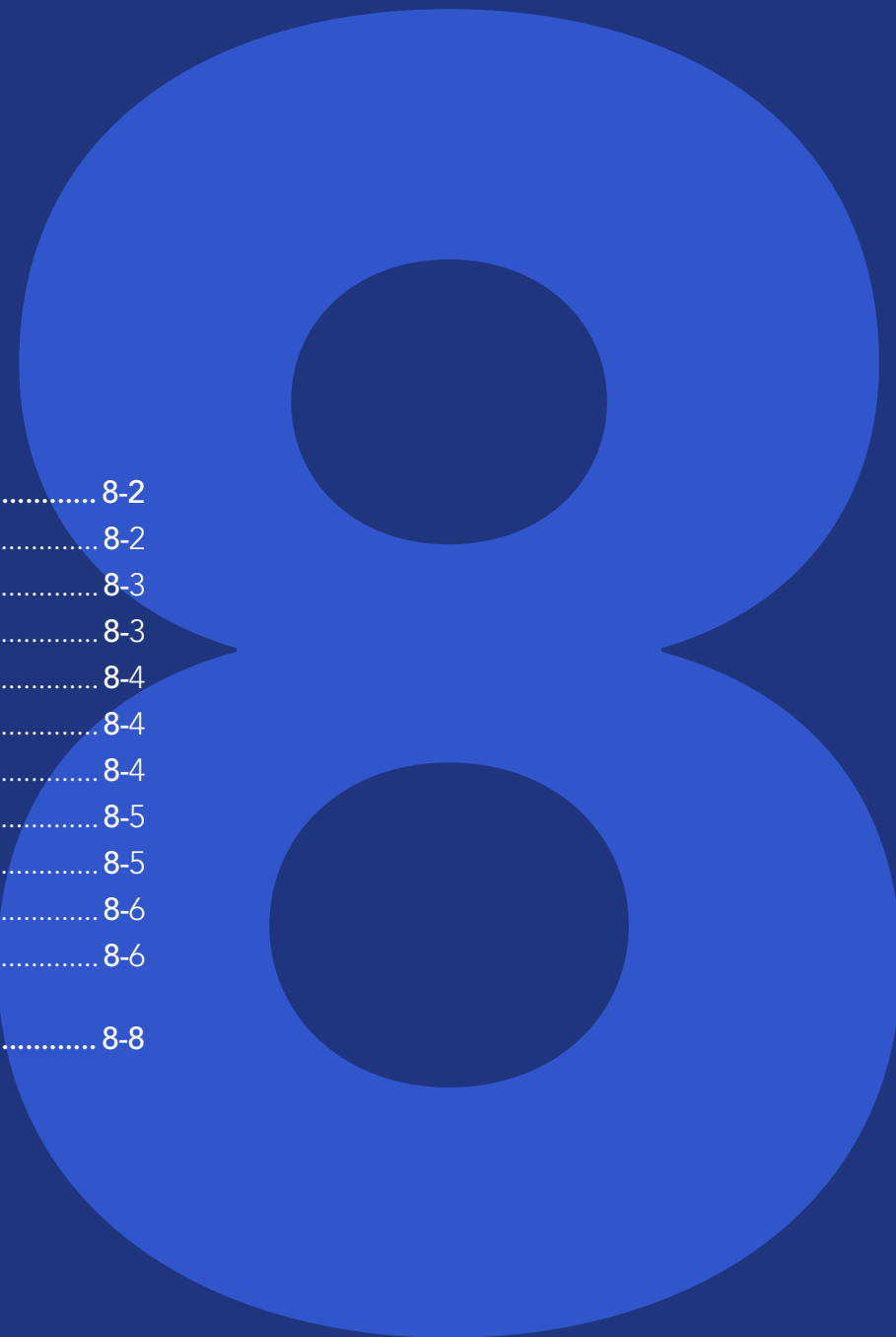
<sup>1</sup> Institutional destinations include general hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, substance abuse treatment facilities, jail, or prison.





# 2019-2020 People Living in Permanent Supportive Housing

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# People Living in Permanent Supportive Housing

IN 2019 AND 2020

## Estimates of People in Permanent Supportive Housing

An estimated **380,000 people** used a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program at some point between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020. The estimated number is 380,595.

PSH is designed to serve people who were experiencing homelessness, often for long periods of time, and who have disabilities that reduce their ability to maintain housing without additional support. PSH programs provide permanent housing combined with intensive supportive services to stabilize people leaving homelessness in housing they can stay in as long as they comply with the lease. PSH has been an important HUD priority for many years, and recent years have seen substantial increased investment in the HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program. PSH can be based in dedicated properties or in scattered-site units rented in the private market.

In March 2020, about halfway through the 2020 reporting year, the United States declared a state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, facility-based emergency shelters with congregate settings reduced the number of beds available for occupancy. In some communities, that may have reduced the numbers of people that could be referred from shelters to PSH. In addition, common places where people experiencing homelessness can connect with services providers, including libraries, town halls, and public parks were also closed during much of this period. More likely, the pressures of the pandemic, including staff shortages, slowed the completion of project-based PSH and the issuance of VASH and other tenant-based vouchers to people referred for PSH. Longer lengths of stay for current residents of PSH may have reduced the number of new residents of existing PSH units and, therefore, the total number of PSH residents during the reporting year.

- More than two-thirds of all people living in PSH in 2020 were people in adult-only households (67% or 255,911 people).
- One-third of PSH residents were people in families with children (33% or 123,527 people).

### Changes between 2019 and 2020

The reporting period for 2019 is October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. An estimated 401,428 people lived in PSH at some point during that year. Given the change to a new platform known as the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), 2019 has now become the baseline for reporting year-to-year change. The text box at the end of this section compares the estimates for 2018, 2019, and 2020 using the 2018 reporting universe. The data reported in this chapter are based on the reporting universe adopted in 2019.

“We had several vacancies during [2020] that proved difficult to fill as a result of COVID-19... [and] our housing stock was reduced as evictions were stopped.”

–Rural CoC in the Mid-Atlantic

### EXHIBIT 8.1: One-Year Estimates of People Living in Permanent Supportive Housing

2019-2020

|  | 2019    |       | 2020    |       | Change 2019-2020 |       |
|--|---------|-------|---------|-------|------------------|-------|
|  | #       | %     | #       | %     | #                | %     |
| Number of Households                             | 293,439 | 100%  | 278,586 | 100%  | -14,853          | -5.1% |
| Number of People                                 | 401,428 | 100%  | 380,595 | 100%  | -20,833          | -5.2% |
| <b>People by Household Type</b>                  |         |       |         |       |                  |       |
| Number of PSH Residents in Adult-Only Households | 266,604 | 66.4% | 255,911 | 67.2% | -10,693          | -4.0% |
| Number of PSH Residents in Family Households     | 133,407 | 33.2% | 123,527 | 32.5% | -9,880           | -7.4% |

### EXHIBIT 8.2: Changes in People in PSH, RRH, and Shelter Programs

2019-2020

| Population                             | Change in People |        | Change in Households 2019-2020 |        |
|--|------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|
|  | #                | %      | #                              | %      |
| Living in Permanent Supportive Housing | -20,833          | -5.2%  | -14,853                        | -5.1%  |
| Using Rapid Re-housing Subsidies       | -18,426          | -7.1%  | -4,271                         | -3.4%  |
| Staying in Shelter Programs            | -203,150         | -14.0% | -142,324                       | -12.9% |

## PEOPLE LIVING IN PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN 2019 AND 2020

The number of people living in PSH declined by five percent between 2019 and 2020 (or 20,833 fewer people). The COVID-19 pandemic makes it difficult to interpret that decline, which could have resulted from several factors related to the pandemic that affected the availability of PSH units and referrals of people to PSH.

- The number of people in adult-only households living in PSH declined by more than 10,000 people (or 4%) between 2019 and 2020.
- The number of people in families with children declined by a similar number (about 10,000 people), and this meant seven percent fewer people in families were living in PSH in 2020 than in 2019.

### Characteristics of People Living in PSH in 2019 and 2020

- Nearly two-thirds of households in PSH had male heads in 2020, comparable to the percentage of men in shelters (62%). This reflects heavy use of PSH for adult-only households.
- Transgender people made up 0.5 percent of heads of households in PSH, similar to the share of transgender heads of households in shelter.
- People over the age of 55 were the largest group of people in PSH, 36 percent of residents. This is much higher than the share of people in shelters who were elderly or near elderly in 2020 (18%).
- A smaller share of heads of households among PSH residents were Hispanic or Latino in 2020 than among households in shelters (12% vs. 16%).
- A higher share of heads of PSH households identified as White, non-Hispanic/non-Latino (44%) than households using shelter programs in 2020 (40%).
- The share of heads of PSH households identifying as Black or African American was about the same as the share of households in shelter that were Black (41% vs. 40%).
- Native Americans were two percent of heads of PSH households compared with three percent of households using shelters.

### Changes in Characteristics of People in PSH

The characteristics of people using PSH changed little between 2019 and 2020. A slightly higher percentage were men (64% vs. 62% percent), and the share 65 and older grew from eight to ten percent.

**EXHIBIT 8.3: Demographic Characteristics of People Living in Permanent Supportive Housing and People Living in Shelters 2019-2020**

|  | 2019                                   |                    | 2020                                   |                    |
|--|--|--------------------|--|--------------------|
|  | Permanent Supportive Housing Residents | People in Shelters | Permanent Supportive Housing Residents | People in Shelters |
| <b>Gender of Heads of Households</b>             |  |                    |  |                    |
| Female   | 37.1%                                  | 38.9%              | 35.9%                                  | 37.7%              |
| Male   | 62.3%                                  | 60.7%              | 63.5%                                  | 61.8%              |
| Transgender                                      | 0.5%                                   | 0.3%               | 0.5%                                   | 0.4%               |
| Gender Non-conforming                            | 0.1%                                   | 0.1%               | 0.0%                                   | 0.1%               |
| <b>Age of all people in the household</b>        |  |                    |  |                    |
| Under age 18                                     | 19.4%                                  | 22.7%              | 19.1%                                  | 21.3%              |
| 18-24  | 4.8%                                   | 9.7%               | 4.7%                                   | 9.3%               |
| 25-34  | 10.0%                                  | 18.8%              | 9.4%                                   | 18.9%              |
| 35-44  | 12.4%                                  | 16.5%              | 12.7%                                  | 17.2%              |
| 45-54  | 19.0%                                  | 15.6%              | 18.0%                                  | 15.5%              |
| 55-64  | 26.4%                                  | 12.9%              | 26.5%                                  | 13.7%              |
| 65 and older                                     | 8.0%                                   | 3.6%               | 9.6%                                   | 4.2%               |
| <b>Ethnicity of Heads of Households</b>          |  |                    |  |                    |
| Hispanic/Latino                                  | 11.7%                                  | 15.8%              | 11.8%                                  | 16.2%              |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                          | 88.3%                                  | 84.2%              | 88.2%                                  | 83.8%              |
| <b>Race of Heads of Households</b>               |  |                    |  |                    |
| Asian or Asian American                          | 0.8%                                   | 0.7%               | 0.5%                                   | 0.8%               |
| Black or African American                        | 42.2%                                  | 40.5%              | 41.3%                                  | 40.0%              |
| Multiple Races                                   | 3.4%                                   | 3.5%               | 3.7%                                   | 3.8%               |
| Native American/American Indian or Alaska Native | 1.9%                                   | 3.0%               | 1.9%                                   | 3.3%               |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander              | 0.5%                                   | 0.9%               | 0.4%                                   | 0.9%               |
| White, Hispanic/Latino                           | 8.7%                                   | 10.8%              | 8.2%                                   | 10.7%              |
| White, non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                   | 42.5%                                  | 40.6%              | 44.0%                                  | 40.4%              |

## PEOPLE LIVING IN PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN 2019 AND 2020

## Length of Time in PSH

PSH provides long-term subsidized housing. Most households that have left homelessness for PSH remain in the housing for extended periods of time.

- In 2020, about a third of residents of PSH had lived there for five years or more (34%), and more than half (53%) had been in PSH for more than three years.
- In 2020, only three percent of PSH residents had been in PSH for three months or less, and only 15 percent had lived there for less than a year.

## Changes in Length of Time in PSH

- Between 2019 and 2020, the number of households in PSH for less than three months declined by 32 percent, and the number in PSH for between three and six months dropped by 37 percent. This reflected reduced placements into PSH during the six months of the reporting period that covered the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Conversely, the number of households in PSH for five years or longer increased by eight percent, and the share in PSH for five years or longer increased from 30 to 34 percent.

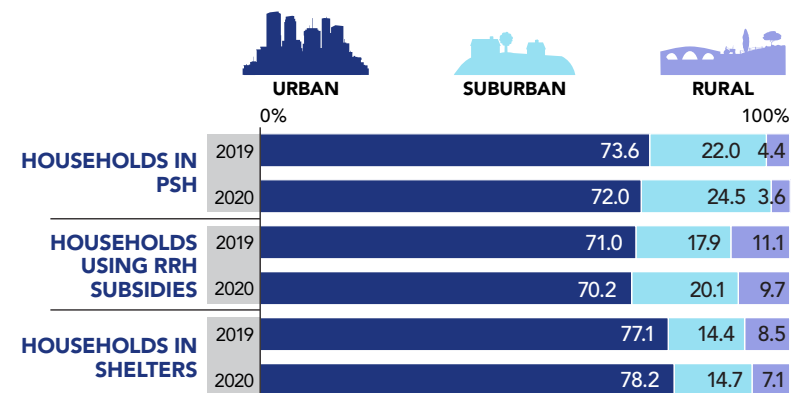
## Geographic Location of PSH

- In 2020, almost three-fourths of people living in PSH did so in urban areas (72%). This is less than the percentage of households staying in shelters who did so in urban areas (78%) but higher than the percentage of households in RRH (70%).
- A quarter of PSH residents were in suburban areas in 2020 (25%), considerably higher than the share of households using shelters who were in suburban areas (15%) and somewhat higher than the share of households in RRH (20%).
- Only four percent of PSH residents lived in rural areas, much less than the share of households using shelters that did so in rural areas in 2020 (7%) and less than half the share of households using RRH subsidies who were in rural areas (10%).

**EXHIBIT 8.4: Length of Stay of Households Living in Permanent Supportive Housing**  
2019-2020

|                 | 2019   |       | 2020   |       | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|-----------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|------------------|--------|
|                 | #      | %     | #      | %     | #                | %      |
| Up to 3 months  | 13,027 | 4.4%  | 8,812  | 3.2%  | -4,215           | -32.4% |
| 3-6 months      | 15,515 | 5.3%  | 9,804  | 3.5%  | -5,711           | -36.8% |
| 6-12 months     | 29,982 | 10.2% | 27,115 | 9.7%  | -2,867           | -9.6%  |
| 1-2 years       | 49,746 | 17.0% | 49,677 | 17.8% | -69              | -0.1%  |
| 2-3 years       | 40,822 | 13.9% | 36,059 | 12.9% | -4,763           | -11.7% |
| 3-5 years       | 57,011 | 19.4% | 52,995 | 19.0% | -4,016           | -7.0%  |
| 5 or more years | 87,366 | 29.7% | 94,124 | 33.7% | 6,758            | 7.7%   |

**EXHIBIT 8.5: Geographic Location of Residents of Permanent Supportive Housing, Households Using RRH Subsidies, and Households Staying in Shelters**  
2019-2020



## PEOPLE LIVING IN PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN 2019 AND 2020

### Additional Characteristics of People Living in PSH

- Almost one of every three adults in PSH was a veteran in 2020 (29%), more than three times the share of adults in shelter who were veterans (9%). This reflects in part the large share of PSH made available to veterans through the HUD-VASH voucher program, discussed at the end of this section. The percentage of adults in PSH who were veterans was highest in suburban areas (43%) and lowest in rural areas (24%).
- In 2020, one in every five heads of household and other adults living in PSH was a survivor of domestic violence (20%), and four percent were currently fleeing unsafe situations. It is important to note that the data represent survivors of domestic violence that accessed permanent supportive housing that was not operated by victim service providers and should not be considered the full estimate of survivorship among people served in permanent supportive housing programs. Given the way data are reported, it is not possible to show the percentage of adults in each geographic category who are survivors of domestic violence. However, data are available on the share of people *currently fleeing* domestic violence by type of geography. In 2020, rural areas accounted for the highest share of people in in PSH who were currently fleeing unsafe situations—eight percent.
- A high percentage of adults living in PSH in 2020 had a disability, 85 percent, consistent with the targeting of most PSH to people with disabilities. The percentage of adults in PSH with a disability may be less than 100, as this includes all adults in the household, not just the adult with the disability that qualified the household for PSH.

### Changes in Additional Characteristics of People in PSH

Unlike the sheltered population, heads of households and other adults in PSH did not appear to have become more vulnerable between 2019 and 2020.

- The shares of heads of households and other adults in PSH who were veterans, who had disabilities, and who were domestic violence survivors stayed constant between 2019 and 2020.
- While there was little change in the number or share of veterans among adults in PSH overall, suburban areas saw a notable increase in the share of adults who were veterans between 2019 and 2020 (37% to 43%).

**EXHIBIT 8.6: Additional Characteristics of People Living in Permanent Supportive Housing 2019-2020**

|  | 2019    |       | 2020    |       | Change 2019-2020 |        |
|--|---------|-------|---------|-------|------------------|--------|
|  | #       | %     | #       | %     | #                | %      |
| <b>Domestic Violence Survivor Status of Heads of Households and Adults</b> |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Total DV Survivors   | 61,803  | 19.2% | 62,002  | 20.2% | 199              | 0.3%   |
| DV Survivors Currently Fleeing   | 10,293  | 3.2%  | 11,228  | 3.7%  | 935              | 9.1%   |
| DV Survivors Not Currently Fleeing   | 45,125  | 14.0% | 45,561  | 14.8% | 436              | 1.0%   |
| DV Survivors with Unknown Fleeing Status                                   | 6,385   | 2.0%  | 5,214   | 1.7%  | -1,171           | -18.3% |
| Not DV Survivors   | 238,770 | 74.1% | 226,969 | 74.0% | -11,801          | -4.9%  |
| Unknown DV Status  | 21,666  | 6.7%  | 17,922  | 5.8%  | -3,744           | -17.3% |
| <b>Disability Status of Heads of Households and Adults</b>                 |         |       |         |       |                  |        |
| Disabled   | 265,435 | 82.4% | 260,025 | 84.7% | -5,410           | -2.0%  |
| Not Disabled   | 47,355  | 14.7% | 42,984  | 14.0% | -4,371           | -9.2%  |
| Disability Status Unknown  | 9,450   | 2.9%  | 3,885   | 1.3%  | -5,565           | -58.9% |

**EXHIBIT 8.7: Characteristics of Adults in PSH by Geography 2019-2020**

| Characteristic of Households | Urban Households |       | Suburban Households |       | Rural Households |       |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                              | 2019             | 2020  | 2019                | 2020  | 2019             | 2020  |
| Veteran                      | 28.8%            | 28.0% | 36.9%               | 42.8% | 20.6%            | 24.0% |
| Domestic Violence Survivor   | 3.3%             | 3.9%  | 3.2%                | 3.4%  | 7.7%             | 7.8%  |

## PEOPLE LIVING IN PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN 2019 AND 2020

## Exit Destination for PSH Households

In 2020, only a small share of households left PSH during the reporting period, which is expected given the long-term nature of the program. Nearly 87 percent of adult-only households and 88 percent of family households living in PSH at some point during 2020 were still active on the last day of the reporting period. For those 14 and 12 percent of households that exited during the 2020 reporting period, LSA data include their housing status at the time of exit.

- Two-thirds of family households exited PSH to another permanent housing destination (67%), not including PSH. For the most part, families exited to their own housing either with a subsidy (25%) or without a subsidy (28%). One in every five family households that left PSH was doubled-up with friends or family on either a permanent or temporary basis. A very small percentage of family households that left PSH went directly to homelessness (3%).
- The share of adult-only households that left PSH and were living in another permanent housing situation was markedly lower than the percent of families (43%). A slightly smaller share of adult-only households left to live with friends or family on a temporary or permanent basis (16%). Adult-only households were more than twice as likely to exit directly to homelessness (7% vs 3%). These exits were distributed evenly across sheltered and unsheltered locations. Nearly one in five adult-only households that were not active on the last day of the reporting period had died at some point during the year.

## Changes in Exit Status and Destination at Exit

Between 2019 and 2020, the percentage of households that left PSH declined. In 2019, 15 percent of both adult-only and family households exited during—and did not return within—the reporting period. This percentage decreased slightly for both household types.

- Exits to other permanent housing situations were lower in 2020 than in 2019 for both household types, from 48 percent to 43 percent for adult-only households and 69 to 67 percent for families. These declines were due entirely to declines in households exiting to permanent housing with a subsidy. In fact, the percentage of both adult-only and family households that left PSH to live in unsubsidized permanent housing increased slightly between 2019 and 2020.
- While the percent of adult-only households that exited directly to any homeless situation remained consistent between 2019 and 2020, the share exiting to unsheltered situations increased slightly while exits to sheltered situations decreased slightly.
- The percentage of heads of adult-only households that died at some point during the reporting period increased from 13 percent in 2019 to 19 percent in 2020.

EXHIBIT 8.8: Exit Status and Destination for Households in PSH  
2019-2020

|  | Adult-Only Households |       | Family Households |       |
|--|-----------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
|  | 2019                  | 2020  | 2019              | 2020  |
| Still in PSH on the last day of reporting period     | 84.6%                 | 86.4% | 84.7%             | 87.6% |
| Left PSH during reporting period                     | 15.4%                 | 13.6% | 15.3%             | 12.4% |
| <b>Housing Status for Households that Exited PSH</b> |                       |       |                   |       |
| Permanent supportive housing (PSH)                   | 1.7%                  | 4.8%  | 1.7%              | 6.0%  |
| Other types of permanent housing                     | 48.4%                 | 43.1% | 68.8%             | 66.5% |
| Permanent housing, no subsidy                        | 16.2%                 | 17.8% | 27.1%             | 28.1% |
| Permanent housing, with subsidy                      | 20.2%                 | 14.6% | 29.8%             | 24.7% |
| Doubled up with friends or family (permanent)        | 12.0%                 | 10.6% | 11.9%             | 13.6% |
| Temporary housing                                    | 7.2%                  | 6.4%  | 7.8%              | 7.4%  |
| Doubled up with friends or family (temporary)        | 6.2%                  | 5.3%  | 6.9%              | 6.4%  |
| Other temporary housing                              | 1.0%                  | 1.1%  | 0.9%              | 1.1%  |
| Homeless   | 7.0%                  | 7.1%  | 2.1%              | 2.6%  |
| Sheltered homeless                                   | 4.6%                  | 3.5%  | 1.9%              | 1.6%  |
| Unsheltered homeless                                 | 2.4%                  | 3.6%  | 0.2%              | 1.0%  |
| Institutional setting                                | 10.9%                 | 10.8% | 3.6%              | 3.8%  |
| Unknown housing status                               | 12.2%                 | 9.2%  | 13.3%             | 9.5%  |
| Deceased   | 12.6%                 | 18.6% | 2.6%              | 4.2%  |

## PEOPLE LIVING IN PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN 2019 AND 2020

**Comparison to 2018 Estimates of People in PSH**

The estimated number of people experiencing homelessness in 2018 cannot be compared to the estimates of people in 2019 and 2020 included in this chapter because of a slightly different reporting universe. The 2018 estimates are slightly broader and include some people who were actively engaged in the homeless services system but did not have a bed night in one of the programs. See About This Report for more information. For comparability, the table below re-creates the 2019 and 2020 estimates using the 2018 reporting universe.

Overall, estimates of people in PSH using the 2018 universe increased between 2018 and 2019, while falling between 2019 and 2020.

**EXHIBIT 8.9: 2019 and 2020 Estimates Using 2018 Reporting Universe**

|   | 2018    | 2019    | 2020    | Number Change<br>2018-2019 | Percent Change<br>2018-2019 | Number Change<br>2018-2020 | Percent Change<br>2018-2020 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| People in Permanent Supportive Housing    | 396,072 | 430,726 | 414,738 | 34,654                     | 8.7%                        | 18,666                     | 4.7%                        |
| <b>Residents of PSH by Household Type</b> |         |         |         |                            |                             |                            |                             |
| People in Adult-Only Households           | 259,691 | 289,363 | 281,923 | 29,672                     | 11.4%                       | 22,232                     | 8.6%                        |
| People in Family Households               | 136,650 | 141,770 | 133,170 | 5,120                      | 3.7%                        | -3,480                     | -2.5%                       |

## PEOPLE LIVING IN PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN 2019 AND 2020

## Veterans Using PSH Provided by the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program

The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program for formerly homeless veterans (HUD-VASH)<sup>1</sup> is a PSH program that combines long-term rental assistance with case management and clinical services for veterans and their families. HUD provides the rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, and the voucher is usually tenant-based and used in scattered-site housing in the private market. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides case management and clinical services through VA medical centers (VAMCs) and community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs).<sup>2</sup>

The VA's Homeless Operations Management and Evaluation System (HOMES) provides information about veterans who use HUD-VASH. The VAMCs and CBOCs that administer the HUD-VASH program are required to report data into HOMES, but many do not also provide information to a Homeless Management information System (HMIS). Although data from HOMES are similar to HMIS data in some respects, the information reported in this section on the characteristics of veterans in HUD-VASH cannot be compared directly to the LSA-based information on veterans in PSH shown earlier in this chapter. As of the end of the FY 2020, 167,046 veterans had been housed through the HUD-VASH program at some point since the program underwent significant expansion in 2008. At the end of FY20, 79,133 HUD-VASH vouchers were currently under lease. Some are included in the veterans in PSH reported earlier in this chapter, but many are not.

### HOMES DATA And HMIS data

- HOMES provides data from the VA's system of care for veterans experiencing homelessness. Submission of data is mandatory for VAMCs and CBOCs. HMIS provides data from the Continuums of Care that serve a broad population of people experiencing homelessness, including veterans. Participation in HMIS is mandatory for grantees of HUD homeless assistance programs but not for all providers of PSH. Public housing agencies that provide HUD-VASH or other housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness are not required to participate in HMIS, although some do.
- Data elements, definitions, and guidelines differ between HOMES and HMIS.
- Both HOMES and HMIS data cover veterans using programs at any time during a year.

1 For more information on the HUD-VASH program see: [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/vash](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash) and <http://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp>.

2 Examples of clinical services are health care, mental health treatment, and substance use counseling.



## PEOPLE LIVING IN PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN 2019 AND 2020

Most veterans using HUD-VASH vouchers in 2020 were men—88 percent.<sup>3</sup> In 2020, just over half of veterans using VASH vouchers (53%) identified themselves as White, 38 percent as Black or African American, and 5 percent as some other race. When asked about their ethnicity, 9 percent identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino of any race. Veterans using VASH housing vouchers typically were 51 years of age or older (68%), with about a quarter between the ages of 31 and 50 (27%), and very few (5%) between 18 and 30. Veterans using VASH vouchers in 2020 were slightly older than those using VASH in 2019.

Approximately 65% of Veterans leaving HUD-VASH programs in FY2020 went to another housing situation (which could be either permanent or temporary), 8 percent went to an institutional setting, 3 percent became homeless, 12 percent were reported as deceased, and 12 percent went to other or unknown settings.

## EXHIBIT 8.10: Characteristics of Veterans Using HUD-VASH PSH

2018-2020

| Characteristic                         | % Veterans Vouchered in HUD-VASH |       |       |
|--|----------------------------------|-------|-------|
|  | 2018                             | 2019  | 2020  |
| <b>Gender</b>                          |                                  |       |       |
| Male                                   | 87.4%                            | 87.1% | 87.8% |
| Female                                 | 12.3%                            | 12.6% | 12.0% |
| Other Gender                           | 0.3%                             | 0.3%  | 0.3%  |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>                       |                                  |       |       |
| Hispanic/Latino                        | 8.5%                             | 8.5%  | 8.6%  |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino                | 87.8%                            | 87.9% | 87.7% |
| Unknown                                | 3.7%                             | 3.5%  | 3.7%  |
| <b>Race</b>                            |                                  |       |       |
| White                                  | 51.8%                            | 52.1% | 52.6% |
| Black or African American              | 39.8%                            | 39.3% | 38.4% |
| Other one race                         | 4.9%                             | 5.0%  | 5.1%  |
| Unknown                                | 3.5%                             | 3.6%  | 3.8%  |
| <b>Age</b>                             |                                  |       |       |
| 18 to 30                               | 6.1%                             | 5.5%  | 4.7%  |
| 31 to 50                               | 28.7%                            | 27.4% | 27.1% |
| 51 to 61                               | 39.8%                            | 36.6% | 34.6% |
| 62 and older                           | 25.5%                            | 30.5% | 33.6% |
| <b>Destination at Exit<sup>a</sup></b> |                                  |       |       |
| Deceased                               | 8.6%                             | 8.7%  | 11.9% |
| Homeless                               | 3.2%                             | 3.1%  | 3.3%  |
| Housing <sup>b</sup>                   | 66.0%                            | 66.0% | 65.3% |
| Institutional settings <sup>c</sup>    | 8.7%                             | 9.1%  | 7.9%  |
| Other settings <sup>d</sup>            | 13.6%                            | 13.0% | 11.5% |

Source: Homeless Operations Management Evaluation System (HOMES) data

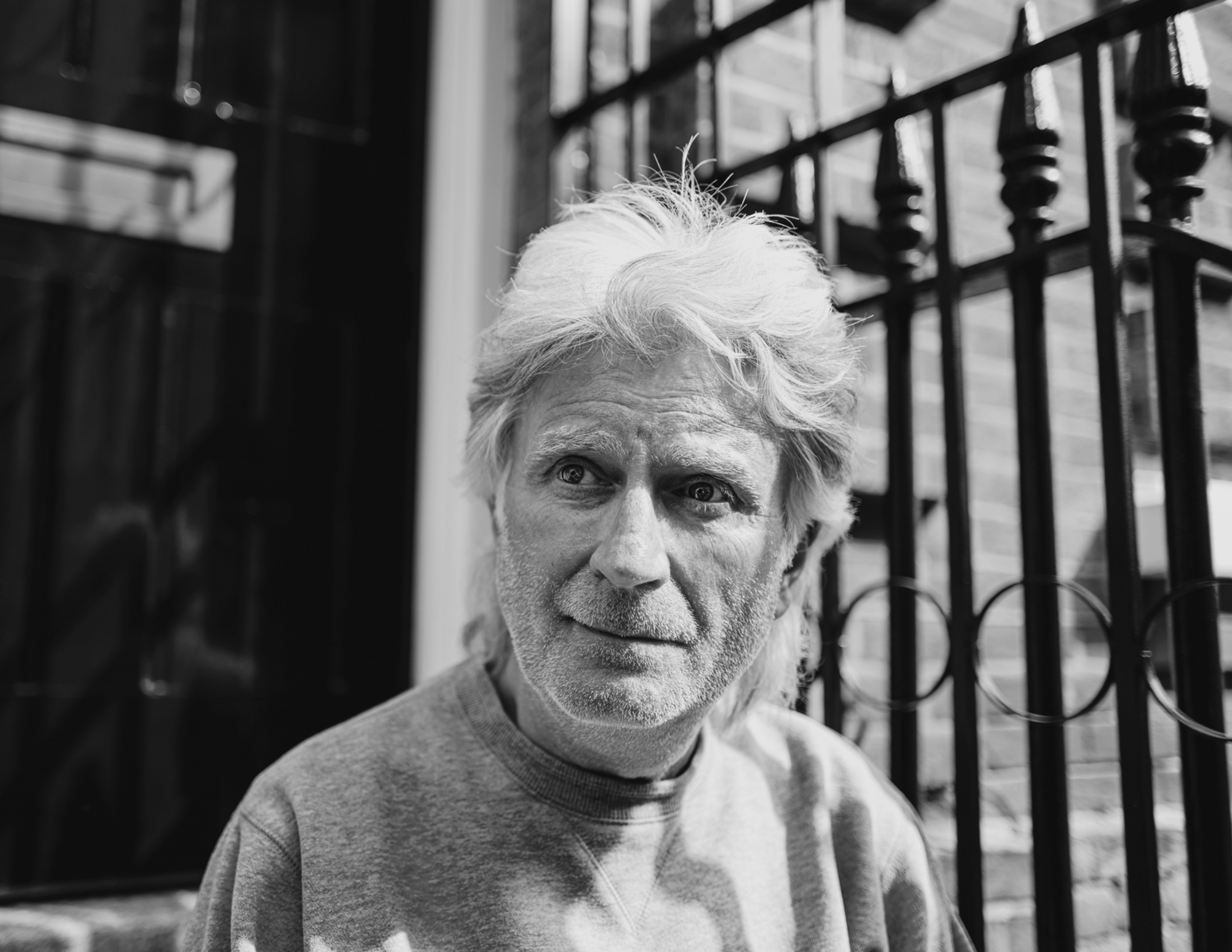
<sup>a</sup> Destination is only calculated for veterans who left the program, which is a small proportion of the total veterans described in the other characteristics.

<sup>b</sup> Housing includes a number of situations, including owned and rented housing that may be subsidized or not subsidized and permanent or temporary (such as staying with family or friends) and transitional housing.

<sup>c</sup> Institutional Settings include psychiatric facilities, non-psychiatric hospitals, correctional facilities, and non-VA and VA residential treatment programs.

<sup>d</sup> For destination at exit, unknown destinations are included in "other" settings.

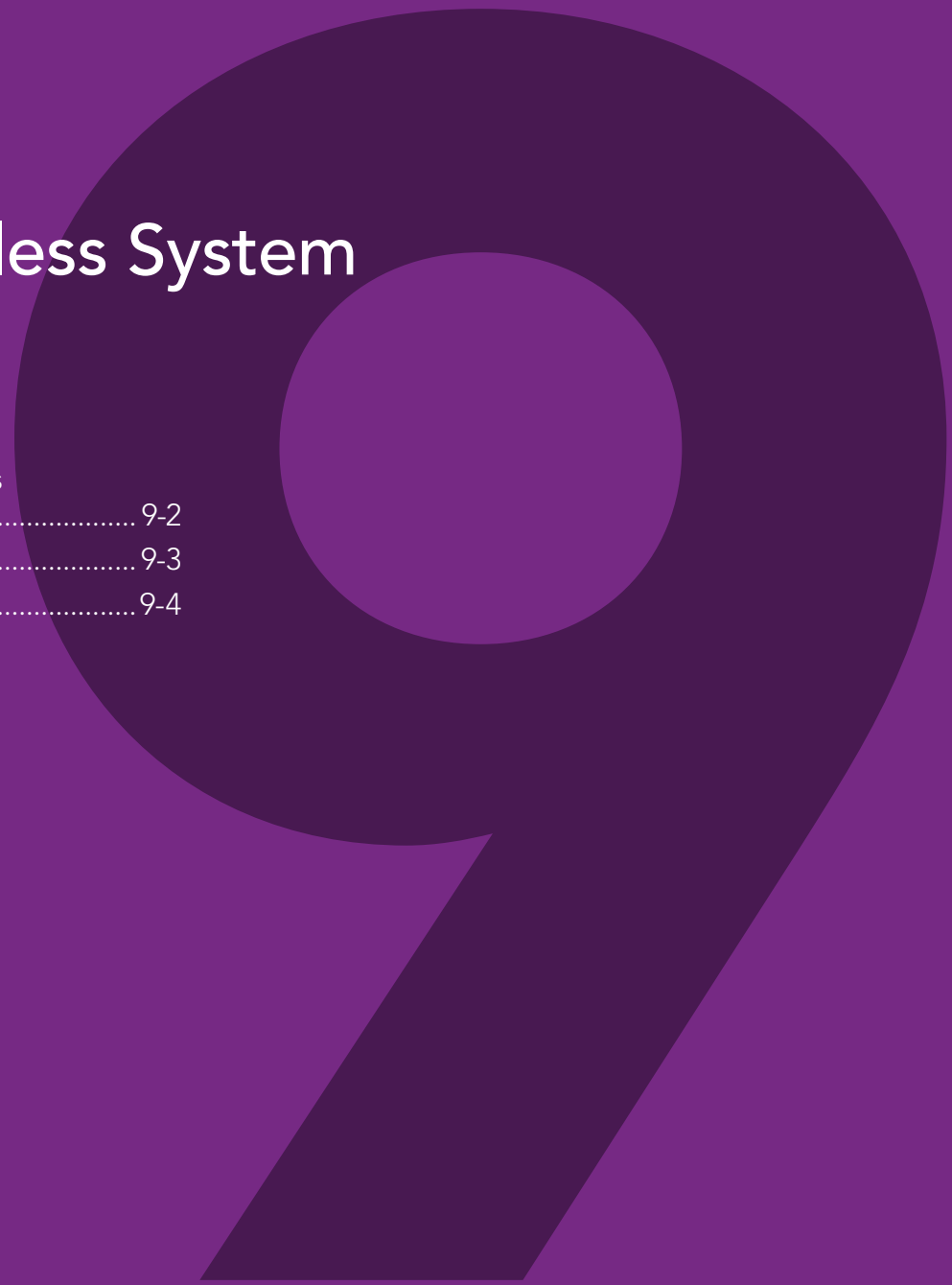
<sup>3</sup> The information is based on the veteran in the household, excluding other household members who may be in the HUD-VASH unit.



**2019-2020**

# Engagement in the Homeless System by Sheltered Households

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# Engagement in the Homeless Service System by Sheltered Households

The Longitudinal System Analysis data include information on the homeless services system—that is, the combination of programs providing temporary shelter and programs that help people leave homelessness for permanent housing. The data show the combination of programs used by households during the reporting period, if they had left shelter programs by the end of the reporting period and where they went.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic that began about halfway through the reporting period, patterns of engagement with the homeless services system during 2020 should be viewed with extreme caution. The numbers may reflect reduced capacity in some communities, as well as people’s reluctance to enter or remain in shelters. In addition, common places where people experiencing homelessness can connect with services providers, including libraries, town halls, and public parks were also closed during much of this period which may have affected system engagement.

## Engagement in the Homeless Service System of Households using Shelter Programs

An estimated 1.3 million distinct households used a shelter program, permanent supportive housing program, or rapid rehousing during the reporting year, October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020. Of those, 960,000 households used a shelter program. Shelter programs are emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens. Overall, few households that used shelter during the reporting period, less than seven percent, also used permanent housing programs that are part of the homeless services system (rapid re-housing (RRH) and permanent supportive housing (PSH)) during the reporting period. Adult-only households were 86 percent of all households using shelters, and the system engagement information largely reflects those households. This chapter focuses on distinctions between the ways adult-only and family households use the homeless services system.

For adult-only households who stayed in shelter at some point during the reporting period, nearly all (94%) did not also use RRH subsidies or live in PSH. Four percent also used RRH, and only two percent also lived in a PSH unit

The pattern for families with children who used homeless shelters was somewhat different. Ten percent also used RRH subsidies. Only one percent also lived in PSH during the reporting period.

The overall number of households using shelters dropped substantially between 2019 and 2020, but the percentages of shelter users also using RRH and PSH changed very little. The percentage of families using RRH subsidies dropped slightly, possibly reflecting greater difficulty finding available housing units during the pandemic or the reduced turnover in RRH program resources as communities extended the RRH subsidy period for families.

“We have seen a large decrease in first-time homelessness due to our pandemic-related eviction moratorium.”  
 –Suburban CoC in the Northeast

**EXHIBIT 9.1: System Engagement Among Households using Shelters**  
 2019-2020

|  | 2019           |                       |                   | 2020           |                       |                   |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
|  | All Households | Adult-Only Households | Family Households | All Households | Adult-Only Households | Family Households |
| Number of Households that used shelter programs                  | 1,102,272      | 935,763               | 507,224           | 959,948        | 824,499               | 416,907           |
| Stayed in Shelter Programs only                                  | 92.8%          | 93.5%                 | 87.6%             | 93.3%          | 93.9%                 | 88.9%             |
| Stayed in Shelter Programs and Used RRH Subsidies                | 5.1%           | 4.2%                  | 11.2%             | 4.4%           | 3.7%                  | 9.6%              |
| Stayed in Shelter Programs and Lived in PSH                      | 1.9%           | 2.1%                  | 1.1%              | 2.0%           | 2.2%                  | 1.3%              |
| Stayed in Shelter Programs, Used RRH Subsidies, and Lived in PSH | 0.2%           | 0.3%                  | 0.1%              | 0.2%           | 0.2%                  | 0.1%              |

Notes: Data do not include people enrolled in RRH or PSH who had not yet moved into a permanent housing unit during the reporting period. The data do not show the order of program use.

## ENGAGEMENT IN THE HOMELESS SERVICE SYSTEM BY SHELTERED HOUSEHOLDS

### Households Who Left Shelters and Their Destinations

The longitudinal systems data show whether a household using shelter at some time during a year was still in shelter at the end of the reporting period or had left. The data also show the “destination” at exit, meaning what type of housing situation the household went to upon leaving shelter.

Adult-only households who used a shelter program were more likely than families to have left the shelter system by the end of the reporting period. Only 18 percent were still in a shelter program on September 30, 2020. This percentage was higher for family households. Nearly one of every three (29%) family households that stayed in shelter at some point during the year was still in shelter on the last day of the reporting period.

Many households are recorded in the data as leaving for unknown destinations, 35 percent of adult-only households leaving shelter and 20 percent of families. This makes it possible, or even likely, that the share still homeless after leaving a shelter is higher than reported, and the share going to temporary or homeless situations is lower.

#### Permanent Housing

In 2020, more than half (53%) of family households that left shelter programs went to permanent housing other than PSH. Most (28%) went to housing with a subsidy. This includes families who moved into permanent housing with a RRH subsidy and families using Housing Choice Vouchers or living in public housing. Fourteen percent moved into a permanent housing unit without assistance. Eleven percent moved in with family or friends on a permanent basis, meaning they thought they would be able to stay as long as they needed. An additional two percent of families exited shelter to PSH.

Adult-only households were far less likely to leave shelter for permanent housing. In 2020, fewer than one of every four adult-only households exiting shelters (23%) went to permanent housing. Only seven percent went to permanent housing with a subsidy or moved in with family or friends on a permanent basis. Eight percent went to their own permanent housing without a subsidy. Similar to families, two percent moved into PSH.

#### Homelessness

In 2020, 23 percent of adult-only households left the homeless system for another homeless situation. The majority (14% of the 23%) went to unsheltered locations. A considerably smaller share of family households remained homeless – including both sheltered and unsheltered locations – after leaving shelter, nine percent in 2020.

#### Doubling Up or Other Temporary Locations

Fifteen percent of family households went from shelter to other temporary situations. In most cases, this was doubling up with friends or family temporarily (13%). An additional 11 percent of family households left shelter to live with friends or family permanently. Doubling up was a less common exit destination for adult-only households, as 11 percent left shelter to double up with friends or family temporarily and seven percent to permanent situations with friends or families.

### EXHIBIT 9.2: Exit Status of Households Using Shelter Programs 2019-2020

| Exit Status  | 2019                  |       |                   |       | 2020                  |       |                   |       |
|--|-----------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
|  | Adult-Only Households |       | Family Households |       | Adult-Only Households |       | Family Households |       |
|  | #                     | %     | #                 | %     | #                     | %     | #                 | %     |
| Still in shelter on the last day of reporting period | 164,905               | 17.9% | 40,407            | 25.6% | 149,976               | 18.4% | 38,434            | 29.1% |
| Left shelter by the end of the reporting period      | 757,830               | 82.1% | 117,419           | 74.4% | 664,119               | 81.6% | 93,745            | 70.9% |

### EXHIBIT 9.3: Exit Destination for People Who Left Shelter Programs 2019-2020

| Destination at Exit                       | 2019                  |                   | 2020                  |                   |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
|   | Adult-Only Households | Family Households | Adult-Only Households | Family Households |
| Permanent supportive housing (PSH)        | 2.0%                  | 2.1%              | 1.8%                  | 2.1%              |
| Other types of permanent housing          | 25.2%                 | 47.7%             | 22.5%                 | 52.5%             |
| Permanent housing, no subsidy             | 9.0%                  | 13.2%             | 8.1%                  | 13.6%             |
| Permanent destination, with subsidy       | 7.3%                  | 24.3%             | 7.4%                  | 27.7%             |
| Living with friends or family (permanent) | 8.9%                  | 10.2%             | 7.0%                  | 11.3%             |
| Temporary housing, not homeless           | 11.6%                 | 15.0%             | 13.0%                 | 15.2%             |
| Living with friends or family (temporary) | 10.1%                 | 12.6%             | 10.9%                 | 12.9%             |
| Other temporary non-homeless situation    | 1.5%                  | 2.3%              | 2.1%                  | 2.3%              |
| Homeless                                  | 18.7%                 | 8.2%              | 22.8%                 | 9.2%              |
| Homeless in shelter                       | 8.7%                  | 5.6%              | 9.1%                  | 6.4%              |
| Unsheltered                               | 10.0%                 | 2.6%              | 13.7%                 | 2.8%              |
| Institutional setting                     | 4.5%                  | 0.8%              | 4.2%                  | 0.9%              |
| Unknown destination                       | 37.7%                 | 26.2%             | 35.4%                 | 20.0%             |
| Deceased                                  | 0.2%                  | 0.1%              | 0.3%                  | 0.1%              |

Notes: Households still in shelter on the last day of the year include households who entered shelters late in the reporting period. Some may have been admitted to RRH or PSH programs but not yet have moved into a housing unit. Households recorded as exiting to shelters may have used shelters in another CoC or may not be recorded as still in shelter on the last day of the reporting period because they went to a shelter that does not provide data to the HMIS.

## ENGAGEMENT IN THE HOMELESS SERVICE SYSTEM BY SHELTERED HOUSHOLDS

### Changes in Destination

Between 2019 and 2020, the most notable change in exit destination for adult-only households was a nearly 20 percent increase in the number of adult-only households who left shelters for unsheltered locations.

Unlike adult-only households, family exits to homelessness declined by 10 percent between 2019 and 2020. However, while the number of exits to homelessness were reduced, the share of households exiting to homelessness was largely unchanged, increasing by one percentage point, from eight to nine percent.





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