Homelessness Rises for 2nd Straight Year as Rents Soar: Blacks, Seniors, Families, Women Especially Hard-Hit

A REPORT ON THE 2024 POINT IN TIME SURVEY:
The Official Count of People Experiencing Homelessness in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish

Despite the Suffering, THERE IS HOPE: Resources Aimed at Housing Those Living on the Streets Are Starting to Make a Positive Impact
LOCAL HOMELESSNESS:
A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE 2024 POINT IN TIME COUNT

- Homelessness in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish has risen for the second straight year as rents have soared and pandemic congressional housing resources targeted specifically to people experiencing homelessness have ended. Local homelessness is up 20 percent over the past two years. This year’s official count of homelessness is 5 percent more than last year’s. A total of 1454 people are now living in homeless shelters or on the street, compared to 1390 a year ago and 1214 two years ago.
- Blacks, seniors, families and women are especially hard-hit by the recent rise in homelessness.
- Family homelessness has soared 69 percent in the past two years.
- Homelessness among Black people has risen 7 percent in the past year, while homelessness among white people is down by 10 percent. Latino homelessness, while a small proportion of overall homelessness, has more than doubled since 2022.
- Homelessness among women is up 17 percent since 2023. While street homelessness among men has decreased in the past year, the number of women living on the street has stayed constant. There are currently 126 women sleeping on the street, at high risk of sexual and other violence.
- The number of seniors over 65 experiencing homelessness has increased by 78 percent over the past six years. Of all people experiencing homelessness in our community, 28 percent -- a total of 406 people -- are over age 55. 114 people who are 65 and over are living in homeless shelters or on the street, while 292 people aged 55-64 are living in homeless shelters or on the street.
- Despite the suffering, the bright spot in the data is that street homelessness -- the most dangerous type of homelessness -- is down 12 percent compared to a year ago. There were 484 people living on the street as of Jan. 22, 2024, compared to 553 in January 2023. This decrease is primarily due to new resources aimed at housing those living on the street. In September 2023, UNITY and Travelers Aid Society launched a Louisiana Housing Corporation Rapid Re-Housing Program to provide permanent housing primarily to people living on the street who were very ill or living in dangerous conditions, as a way to “jumpstart” the new federal Unsheltered Homelessness grant UNITY had been awarded but had not yet received a federal contract to begin. At the same time, the City of New Orleans launched its Encampments Initiative in partnership with UNITY and Travelers Aid and private philanthropy to permanently house people living in homeless camps. Earlier in 2023, the City of New Orleans had worked closely with street outreach teams to move more than 100 people from encampments into the city’s Low Barrier Shelter, dramatically reducing the street census.
- While the people living in large downtown encampments are highly visible, only 27 percent of the 484 people sleeping on the streets live in encampments (defined for the purposes of this report as 10 or more people per block), while 73 percent are sleeping alone, in pairs or in small groups.
- At the time of the January 2024 PIT count, 65 percent of those living on the streets were living in the 70112, 70113, 70116 and 70130 zip codes (primarily the French Quarter, Seventh Ward, Central City and CBD), while 35 percent were scattered elsewhere throughout the two parishes, including Metairie, Marrero, Midcity, Gert Town, Broadmoor, Gentilly, Bywater and the Lower Ninth Ward.
ABOUT THE POINT IN TIME SURVEY

The 2024 Homeless Point in Time (PIT) Count for New Orleans and Jefferson Parish took place on January 22, 2024, utilizing as surveyors people with lived experience of homelessness, community volunteers, and staff of the 50 agencies that make up the New Orleans/Jefferson Parish/City of Kenner Homeless Continuum of Care.

The Point in Time Count, conducted by UNITY of Greater New Orleans and its partner agencies, is the official comprehensive annual survey of all persons experiencing literal homelessness in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish. This data is submitted to the federal government by UNITY and included in the federal report on homelessness published later in the year. The count is conducted each January in order to provide as comprehensive and accurate a tally as possible of how many persons are homeless during one 24-hour period in emergency shelter, in homeless transitional housing, and in places not meant for human habitation on any given night. The Point in Time Count is required, and its scope and methodology governed, by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The intent is to provide information with which to better understand the nature and extent of homelessness in the New Orleans area, and to provide information with which to gauge the need for resources to end and prevent homelessness and the type of resources needed.

Staff and volunteers fanned out across the City and Jefferson Parish to administer surveys on the streets and parks and in homeless programs and other locations where people living on the streets are known to gather, asking people where they had stayed the night of January 22 and asking certain demographic information.

In addition to the annual Point in Time survey, UNITY of Greater New Orleans and its partners also do street surveys at other times of the year. In partnership with its member agency, VIA Link, UNITY also maintains a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in which all of its funded agencies, as well as those funded by the City of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish under their HUD Emergency Solutions Grant programs, and many VA-funded programs, enter data on all clients. HMIS data can provide information on how many homeless people are served over a longer period of time, which is a larger number than that on any given night, since most homeless people are only homeless for a matter of days, weeks, or months. HMIS data typically does not include people who have not received services, whereas the PIT Count includes those not receiving services.

ABOUT UNITY

The Point in Time Count is coordinated by UNITY of Greater New Orleans, a nonprofit organization leading a collaborative of about 50 nonprofit and governmental agencies that provide housing and services to people experiencing homelessness in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish. Founded in 1992, UNITY’s mission is to coordinate community partnerships to prevent, reduce and end homelessness. UNITY is designated by the federal government to apply for competitive federal Homeless Continuum of Care funds on behalf of the community and to oversee the distribution and use of the funds for the nonprofit and governmental agencies in the collaborative. These grants require the recipient agencies to provide 25 percent matching funds. UNITY works in close partnership with HUD, the City of New Orleans, Jefferson Parish government, the City of Kenner, the Louisiana Housing Corp., the Louisiana Department of Health, the VA, housing authorities, behavioral health agencies, and a host of nonprofit organizations. UNITY trains its member agencies on evidence-based and emerging best practices and oversees the work of the collaborative. At any given point, UNITY and its member agencies are providing permanent housing and case management services to about 3500 people who previously were rescued from homelessness; most of these clients, because of the severity of their disabilities and poverty, will be long-term clients of the collaborative in order to prevent them from falling back into homelessness.
HOMELESSNESS RISES FOR 2nd STRAIGHT YEAR AS RENTS SOAR
20% Increase in Overall Homelessness Since 2022
But number living on street decreased due to special housing initiatives

In the first two years of the pandemic, overall homelessness - and street homelessness in particular - decreased significantly due to congressional COVID resources for permanent housing for those experiencing homelessness. But as rents skyrocketed and COVID resources earmarked for homelessness dried up, by January 2023 overall homelessness reached levels higher than before the pandemic, and street homelessness returned to pre-COVID levels. On the positive side, resources aimed at housing those on the streets (the state Rapid Re-Housing grant that began in September 2023) and a major city initiative providing new shelter beds for those on the street) created an 12% reduction in street homelessness between January 2023 and January 2024 (from 553 persons to 484 persons), even while the number of people in homeless shelters grew by 16% (from 837 persons to 970 persons).
NATIONAL AND LOCAL TREND LINES IN HOMELESSNESS, 2016-2023

New Orleans Largely Resisted National Trend of Rising Homelessness Until Recently, But Local Homelessness Jumped 14% between 2022-23, While National Homelessness Rose 12%

Homelessness Nationally Rises 19% 2016-2023

Homelessness Locally Decreases by 15% 2016-2023

National data is not yet available for the 2024 Point in Time Count.
Long-term Trends: Homelessness Down 27% in the Past Decade, And 87% Since Post-Katrina High of 2007

According to UNITY’s annual January Point in Time Counts, the number of people experiencing homelessness in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish is down 27 percent since 2014, and down 87 percent since post-Katrina high of 2007, when 11,619 people were literally homeless.
Number of Seniors Experiencing Homelessness Has Increased by 78 Percent Over the Past 6 Years

The number of people experiencing homelessness who are 65 and over has increased by 78 percent over the past six years.

Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count
Age of People Experiencing Homelessness: 28% Are Over 55

Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count
Family Homelessness Soars 69 Percent in Past 2 Years

The primary causes are soaring rents and loss of pandemic programs that assisted low-income families. The UNITY collaborative uses Rapid Re-Housing rental assistance, with case management services provided in the home, to re-house families experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible. We have also implemented the strategy of Problem-Solving services and one-time financial assistance to help families resolve housing crises without having to become homeless.

Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count
Homelessness Among Women on the Rise: Up 17% Since 2023

Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count
Homelessness Among Black People Rises 7 Percent in 1 Year, While Homelessness Among White People Down 10 Percent

There was a 162% increase in Latino homelessness since 2022, from 21 persons to 55.

Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count
Literal homelessness (living on the street or in emergency shelter) among veterans has decreased by 91 percent since 2011. During the pandemic, the VA made hotels available to veterans in need of housing, which counts as homeless shelter. In general, there are many more dedicated federal resources for veterans experiencing homelessness than for any other subpopulation experiencing homelessness. By quickly identifying veterans experiencing homelessness and targeting available resources during a weekly community-wide meeting, we have been able to keep the numbers of veterans experiencing homelessness relatively low, the number on the street very low, and the time they spend in homelessness relatively brief compared to other subpopulations.

Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count
Where People Are Living On the Streets

Orleans and Jefferson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Zip Codes</th>
<th>Unsheltered People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metairie</td>
<td>70001/70002/70003/70005</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gretna</td>
<td>70053</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrytown</td>
<td>70056</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey</td>
<td>70058</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenner</td>
<td>70062</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrero</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westwego</td>
<td>70094</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>French Quarter</td>
<td>70112</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central City</td>
<td>70113</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algiers/Behrman</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptown</td>
<td>70115</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Quarter/Seventh Ward/St. Roch/Marigny</td>
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<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Claude /Bywater/Lower Ninth Ward/Holy Cross</td>
<td>70117</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Carrollton/Hollygrove/Leonidas</td>
<td>70118</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midcity</td>
<td>70119</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Jefferson</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentilly</td>
<td>70122</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gert Town/Dixon/Broadmoor</td>
<td>70125</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans East</td>
<td>70126/70127/70128/70129</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD/Lower Garden District</td>
<td>70130</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total People Living on the Streets</strong></td>
<td><strong>484</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the **484 people living on the streets of Orleans and Jefferson parishes** during the Jan. 22, 2024 count, 27 percent live in homeless camps (defined here as 10 or more people per block), while 73 percent are sleeping alone, or in pairs or small groups.
Those Living on the Streets Have High Rates of Disability

This data is taken from professional assessments of 1013 persons assisted to leave the streets and move into hotels during the pandemic, 2020-2022.
Highest Level of Education Attained by Adults Experiencing Homelessness: 34% Have No High School Diploma or GED

Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count
94% of Persons Experiencing Homelessness in our Community Live in Orleans, While 6% Live in Jefferson

Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count