

ILLINOIS STATE OF HOMELESSNESS REPORT

CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS
2022

Temporarily staying with others (or “doubling up”) is the way that most people—particularly families with children—experience homelessness in Illinois. Homeless services are equipped to provide shelter and transitional housing to only a fraction of those experiencing homelessness, so temporarily staying with others is a means of survival.

In 2020, Illinois estimated 10,431 people experiencing street and shelter homelessness on any given day, as reported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).¹ The *Point-in-Time count* tallies people experiencing street and shelter homelessness on a designated night of the year—usually every January.

The Point-in-Time count is used to determine which communities receive essential federal housing, transportation, and public health assistance, including COVID-19 relief funds, but this HUD-mandated count fails to account for the way most people experience homelessness in Illinois: temporarily staying with others.

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes all forms of homelessness that children and youth might experience, inclusive of families that are experiencing homelessness by temporarily staying with others. In the 2019-20 school year, Illinois schools identified 47,445 students experiencing homelessness, or 2.4% of Illinois school enrollment.²

To better reflect all forms of homelessness one might experience, researchers at Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Vanderbilt University, and the Heartland Alliance Social IMPACT Research Center developed a model to better estimate the total scope of people experiencing homelessness, incorporating people experiencing homelessness by temporarily staying with others.

Any estimate of people experiencing homelessness is limited to what is documented, and no single data source is a complete reflection of all homelessness. This report summarizes data from four different datasets that are imperfect as standalone measures, but together provide more insight into the scope of homelessness.

¹ Illinois Homelessness Statistics, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, available at [usich.gov/homelessness-statistics](https://www.usich.gov/homelessness-statistics), 2020.

² *Student Homelessness in America*, National Center for Homeless Education, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, available at [nche.edu](https://www.nche.edu), 2021.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness describes a situation where someone lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence—but what is *fixed*, *regular*, and *adequate*? It depends who you ask.

For the U.S. Department of Education, the definition of homelessness acknowledges that that these experiences are not linear. Most people experiencing homelessness stay wherever they can, often forced to move frequently among unstable living situations — sleeping in motels, cars, and trains, or temporarily staying with others. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has a far more limited scope of homelessness. HUD requires that someone have a nighttime residence that is either a shelter or a place not meant for human habitation to be considered homeless. People that are couch-surfing are excluded from the HUD definition of homelessness.

What is at stake? Defining homelessness is a first step toward ending homelessness. Counts of people experiencing homelessness determine which communities receive essential federal housing, transportation, and public health assistance, including COVID-19 relief funds.

For people experiencing **sheltered and unsheltered homelessness**, the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s definition of homelessness includes someone staying in a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, as well as public or private places not designed for, or typically used as, a regular sleeping accommodation.³

For people experiencing **homelessness by temporarily staying with others**, this report defines poor individuals and families in poor households as “temporarily staying with others” when they fall outside of the conventional household composition and cannot afford to live in housing of their own or formally contribute to housing costs. *Read more about our approach at chicagohomeless.org/approach.*

People experiencing homelessness by temporarily staying with others need crucial homeless services, but the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s method for enumerating homelessness excludes these arrangements.

WANT TO TAKE ACTION? Support definition change legislation like the Homeless Children & Youth Act, and support campaigns that create non-HUD housing solutions like Bring Chicago Home.

³ Criteria and Recordkeeping Requirements for Definition of Homeless, HUD Exchange, available at hudexchange.info/resources/.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY DOUBLING UP IN ILLINOIS?

NORTHWEST

TOTAL: 9,420
Age 0-13: 1,862
Age 14-17: 1,151
Age 18-24: 2,733
Age 25+: 3,674

CHICAGO

TOTAL: 49,585
Age 0-13: 12,891
Age 14-17: 2,525
Age 18-24: 14,183
Age 25+: 19,986

COLLAR COUNTIES

TOTAL: 35,097
Age 0-13: 9,032
Age 14-17: 1,690
Age 18-24: 9,127
Age 25+: 15,248

CENTRAL

TOTAL: 8,451
Age 0-13: 1,781
Age 14-17: 1,090
Age 18-24: 2,533
Age 25+: 3,047

IL STATE

TOTAL: 109,842
Age 0-4: 14,040
Age 5-13: 13,295
Age 14-17: 6,585
Age 18-24: 30,954
Age 25+: 44,968

SOUTH

TOTAL: 7,289
Age 0-17: 1,898
Age 18-24: 2,378
Age 25+: 3,013

Methodological Source: Richard, M.K., Dworkin, J., Rule, K.G., Farooqui, S., Glendening, Z., & Carlson, S. *Quantifying Doubled-Up Homelessness: Presenting a New Measure Using U.S. Census Microdata*. Housing Policy Debate. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2021.1981976>

Data extracted from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 10.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V10.0>

ILLINOIS SCOPE OF HOMELESSNESS

The Department of Housing and Urban Development reports 10,431 people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in January 2020.⁴ The Point-in-Time count is used to determine which communities receive essential federal housing, transportation, and public health assistance, including COVID-19 relief funds, but this HUD-mandated count fails to account for the way most people experience homelessness in Illinois: temporarily staying with others.

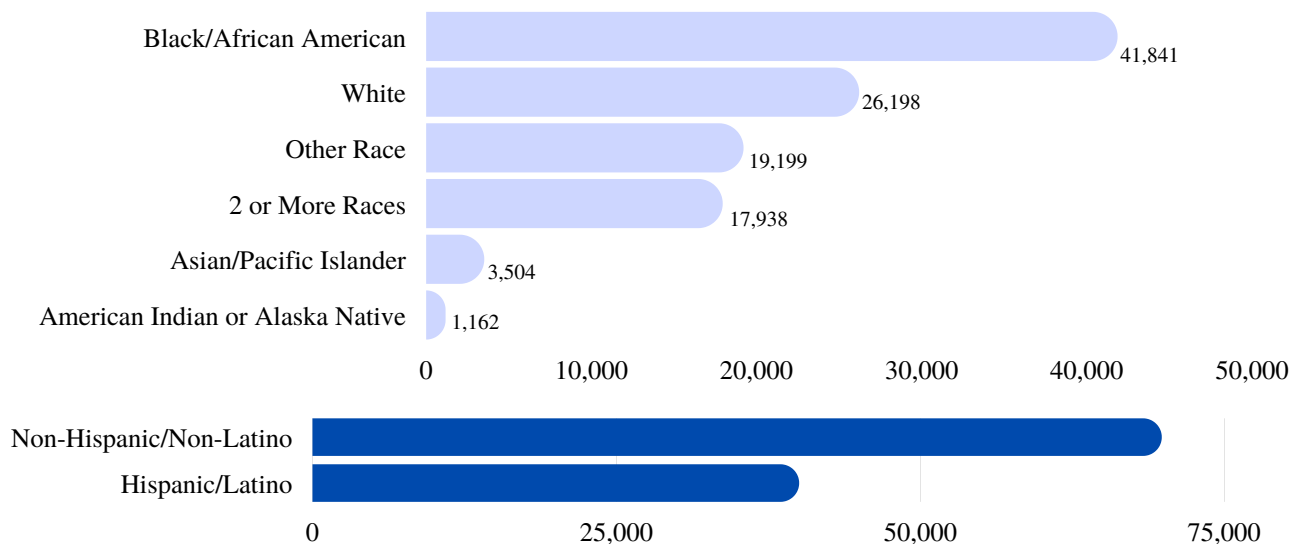
IN 2020, AT LEAST 39,421 ILLINOIS PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS—MORE THAN TRIPLE THE HUD COUNT OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS THAT SAME YEAR.

People experiencing homelessness by temporarily staying with others need crucial homeless services, but until the HUD definition is changed to better reflect the true scope of homelessness, many Illinois families are barred from these services—especially Black and Brown people.

In 2020, only 23.9% of people experiencing homelessness by doubling up identified as White. System-embedded white supremacy continues to limit Black and Brown Illinoisans' access to crucial resources. The homeless services system continues to prioritize White people experiencing homelessness over Black and Brown people—

IN ILLINOIS, AN ESTIMATED 109,842 PEOPLE EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS BY DOUBLING UP IN 2020.

especially Black mothers. Recent research finds that White women that have experienced traumatic life events are consistently perceived as more vulnerable than Black women that have experienced the same events. In a system that prioritizes housing opportunities based off of vulnerability, Black and Brown families are kept homeless.



Methodological Source: Richard, M.K., Dworkin, J., Rule, K.G., Farooqui, S., Glendening, Z., & Carlson, S. *Quantifying Doubled-Up Homelessness: Presenting a New Measure Using U.S. Census Microdata*. Housing Policy Debate. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2021.1981976>

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⁴ HUD 2020 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations (Illinois), HUD Exchange.

HOMELESS ESTIMATE OF CHICAGO, IL

An estimated **65,611 people** were experiencing homelessness in Chicago in 2020. This in-depth analysis includes sheltered, unsheltered, and people temporarily staying with others, and it is a 7,338-person increase (+12.6%) from 2019, immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fewer Chicagoans experienced sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, but Chicago saw a large spike (+20%) in people temporarily staying with others (or “doubling up”).

RACE & ETHNICITY

- **Due to longstanding structural and historical racism, homelessness continues to disproportionately impact Black/African American Chicagoans.** Black/African American Chicagoans make up 55.8% of the total population experiencing homelessness in 2020. Of people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, 75.9% identified as Black or African American.
- **Chicago saw a spike in Hispanic/Latiné people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.** In 2020, an estimated 18,272 Hispanic/Latiné Chicagoans experienced homelessness; in 2019, an estimated 12,813 people identified as Hispanic or Latino. Many Hispanic/Latiné Chicagoans experiencing homelessness are barred from crucial homeless services because Hispanic/Latiné people experiencing homelessness are more likely to stay with others than stay in an emergency shelter.

	TOTAL	Sheltered & Unsheltered*	Temporarily Staying with Others**
RACE			
Black/African American	36,613	12,159 (↓ 820)	24,454 (↑ 3,308)
Other Race	9,424	0	9,424 (↑ 4,432)
2 or More Races	8,928	0	8,928 (↑ 8,478)
White	8,215	2,885 (↓ 261)	5,330 (↓ 6,154)
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander	1,464	122 (↓ 51)	1,342*** (↓ 1,139)
Race Not Recorded	708	708 (↑ 282)	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	259	152 (↓ 67)	107*** (↓ 470)
ETHNICITY			
Non-Hispanic and Non-Latino	45,352	14,039 (↓ 956)	31,313 (↑ 2,796)
Hispanic/Latino	11,032	1,489 (↓ 189)	18,272 (↑ 5,459)
Ethnicity Not Recorded	498	498 (↑ 188)	0

* Chicago Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), All Chicago Making Homelessness History. All Chicago was not involved in the data analysis included in this report, and the conclusions in this report do not represent the views of All Chicago.

** Data extracted from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 10.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V10.0>

*** indicates that this total should be used with caution (coefficient of variation ≥ 30)

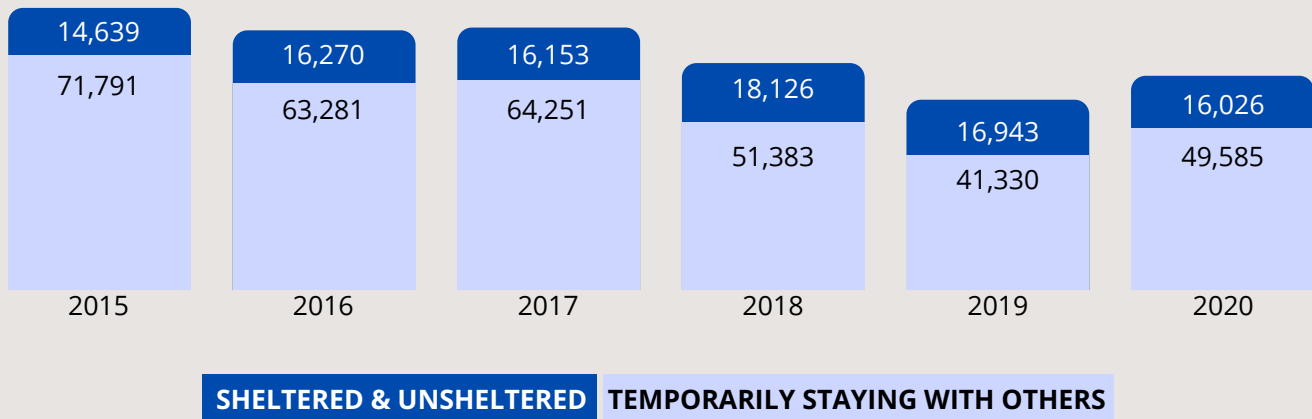
TYPE OF HOMELESSNESS

Most Chicagoans experiencing homelessness temporarily stay with others at some point throughout the year. Of the 65,611 people experiencing homelessness in 2020, 75.6% were temporarily staying with others. According to HMIS data, 20,011 people utilized the homeless service system and 1 in every 5 people reported temporarily staying with others at least once in 2020.

	TOTAL	Sheltered & Unsheltered*	Temporarily Staying with Others**
AGE			
0 - 4	7,503	1,811 (age 0-2)	5,242
		268 (age 3-4)	
5 - 17	11,032	800 (age 5-13)	9,992
		240 (age 13-17)	
18 and Older	47,076	12,907	14,183 (age 18-24)
			19,986 (age 25+)

CHANGE OVER TIME

The rate of people experiencing street and shelter homelessness has seen little change. While Chicago has seen large fluctuations in the population of people experiencing homelessness by temporarily staying with others, the city has seen very little change in the population experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.



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