



# 2023 Homeless Count

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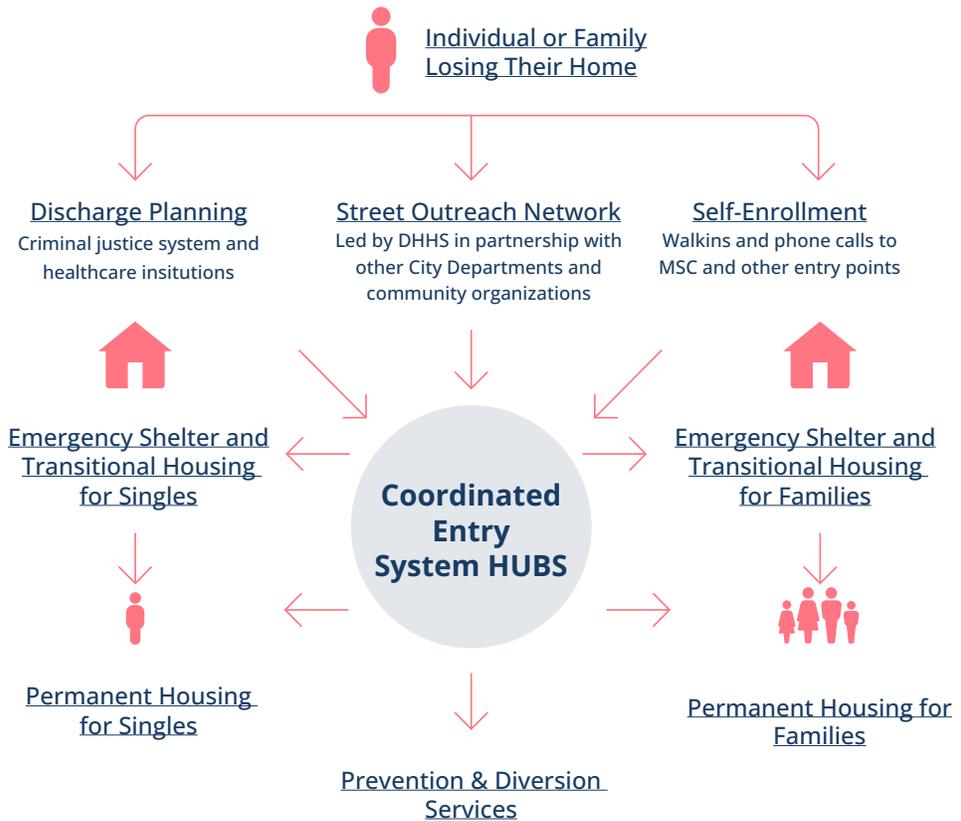
# Executive Summary



# Introduction

The City has a robust system of care to address the diverse needs of our community members experiencing homelessness. The Long Beach Continuum of Care (CoC), made up of over 80 service partners, brings together vital resources to serve people experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Services Bureau, as part of the City’s Health and Human Services Department, is the lead for the Long Beach Continuum of Care (CoC). The Long Beach Health Department stands by a Housing First model, which means providing access as quickly as possible to a stable setting without sobriety or health treatment compliance; self-determination, the belief that people’s lives will improve with support and a stable place; individualized and person-driven supports; and social and community integration. Additional practices that the CoC utilizes to support at-risk or households experiencing homelessness include:

- Individualized delivery of services that are grounded in evidence-based practices for households experiencing and at risk of homelessness.
- Integrating key partners into the Coordinated Entry System (CES) to ensure a holistic approach to accessing and receiving services.
- Coordinated intakes and application processes linked to supportive services and financial assistance programs.
- Interdepartmental and inter-jurisdictional coordination among government departments to utilize expertise and resources to address homelessness in a systematic way.



# Point in Time (PIT) Count Informs the City's System of Care

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The PIT Count is a nationwide count of people experiencing homelessness living within a given community on a single morning in January. This count is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the state of California in order to receive funding to address homelessness. The City of Long Beach's CoC receives these grants and finds it is vital to better understand the trends, issues and demographics of our fellow community members experiencing homelessness. By engaging fully in this annual count, we can provide better data to service providers, government entities and community members so we can continue to work together on developing effective and appropriate homeless interventions in the City of Long Beach.



# Setting the Context

The 2023 count shows 3,447 people experiencing homelessness in our city. This number signifies a 4.6% increase from last year, the smallest increase Long Beach has reported since 2019, a testament to the City's commitment to expanding affordable housing opportunities and services to help keep people from falling into homelessness.

Notably, the city saw an increase in people experiencing homelessness for the first time in 2023. While the economy has stabilized somewhat since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when unemployment reached 19%, city residents are now contending with inflation, rising interest rates, significant increases in the cost of housing, and the drawdown of supports that stabilized housing during the pandemic era.

The City of Long Beach is working hard to meet the current need among people experiencing homelessness while looking at upstream supports that could reduce future homelessness.

On January 10, 2023, homelessness in Long Beach was proclaimed a local emergency, which has strengthened the City's preparedness and ability to respond to homelessness. Given the current crisis, it is critical to move quickly and efficiently to expand housing and services. The emergency allows for an increased ability to hire or contract critical roles and recruit qualified candidates; more quickly engage needed services, material and labor; speed up large-scale construction projects such as motel conversions and tiny homes; and work through zoning requirements that currently exclude certain uses of existing properties.

The 2023 Homeless Point in Time Count, which was conducted 16 days after the emergency was proclaimed, will be the yardstick by which the City can measure the effectiveness of the policies and programs established during the emergency.





# At a Glance

The 2023 Count was conducted in the early hours of January 26, 2023, with the help of an unprecedented number of volunteers – nearly 300 people dedicated their time to compassionately count and interview their neighbors who are unhoused. Volunteers included members of community-based organizations and the business community, members of the public and City staff.

2023 Demographics & Survey Results Overview of findings generated from the survey component of the 2023 Long Beach Homeless Point in Time Count & Survey

### Total Count



**3,447**

People were experiencing homelessness on the morning of Feb. 24, 2023

### Chronically Homeless



**1,357**  
39%

- Sheltered: 233
- Unsheltered: 1,124

### Unsheltered Count



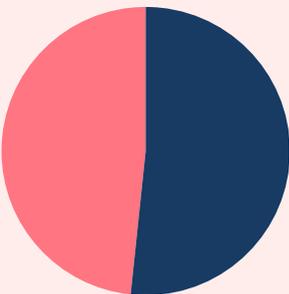
**2,456**  
71.3% Unsheltered

### Sheltered Count



**991**  
28.7% Sheltered

### First Time Homeless



**52.6%**

Reported that this is their first episode of homelessness



# 2023 Demographics & Survey Results

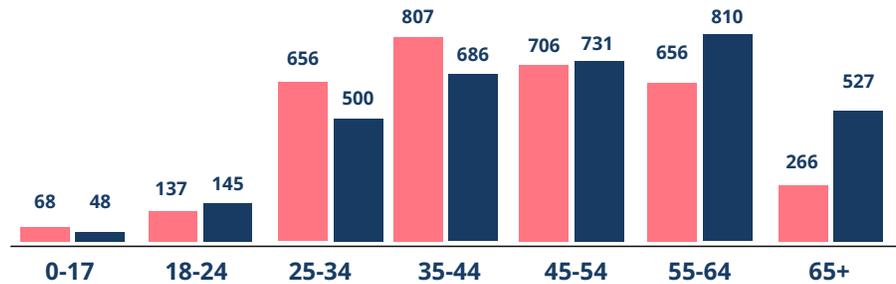
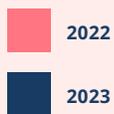
Overview of findings generated from the survey component of the 2023 Long Beach Homeless Point in Time Count & Survey

# Demographics

## 2023 Demographics & Survey Results

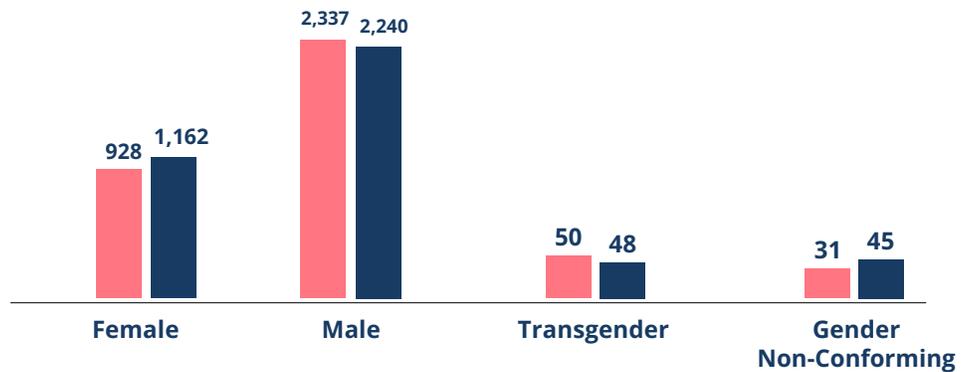
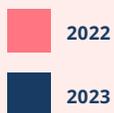
### Age

2023



### Gender

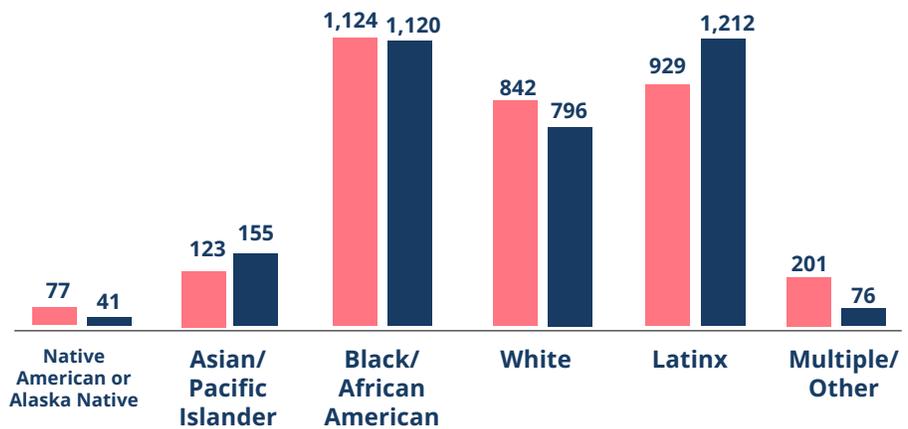
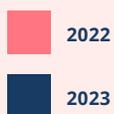
2023



### Race

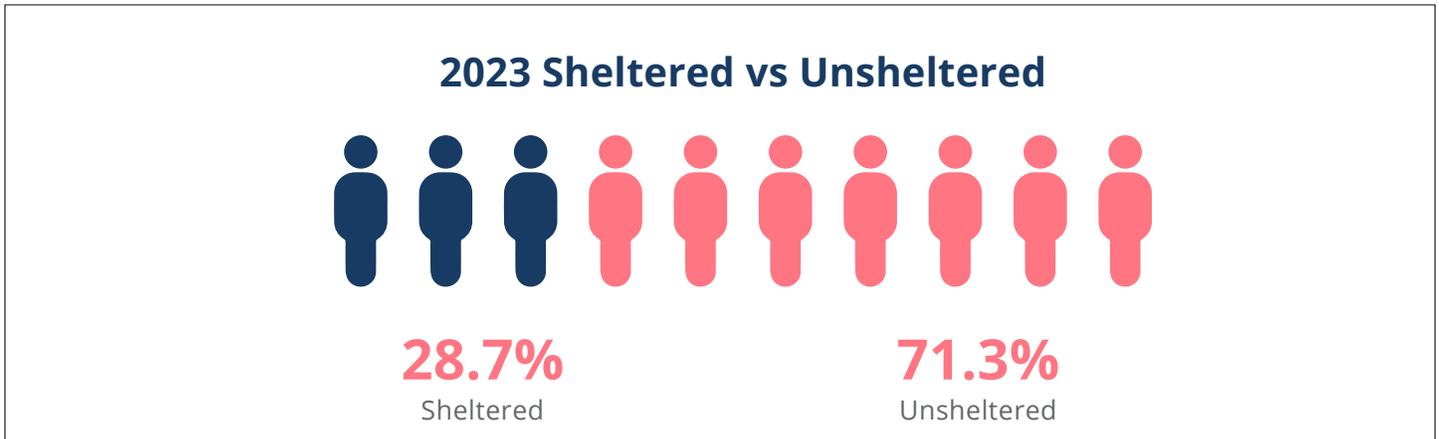
(Including Latinx in Race)

2023

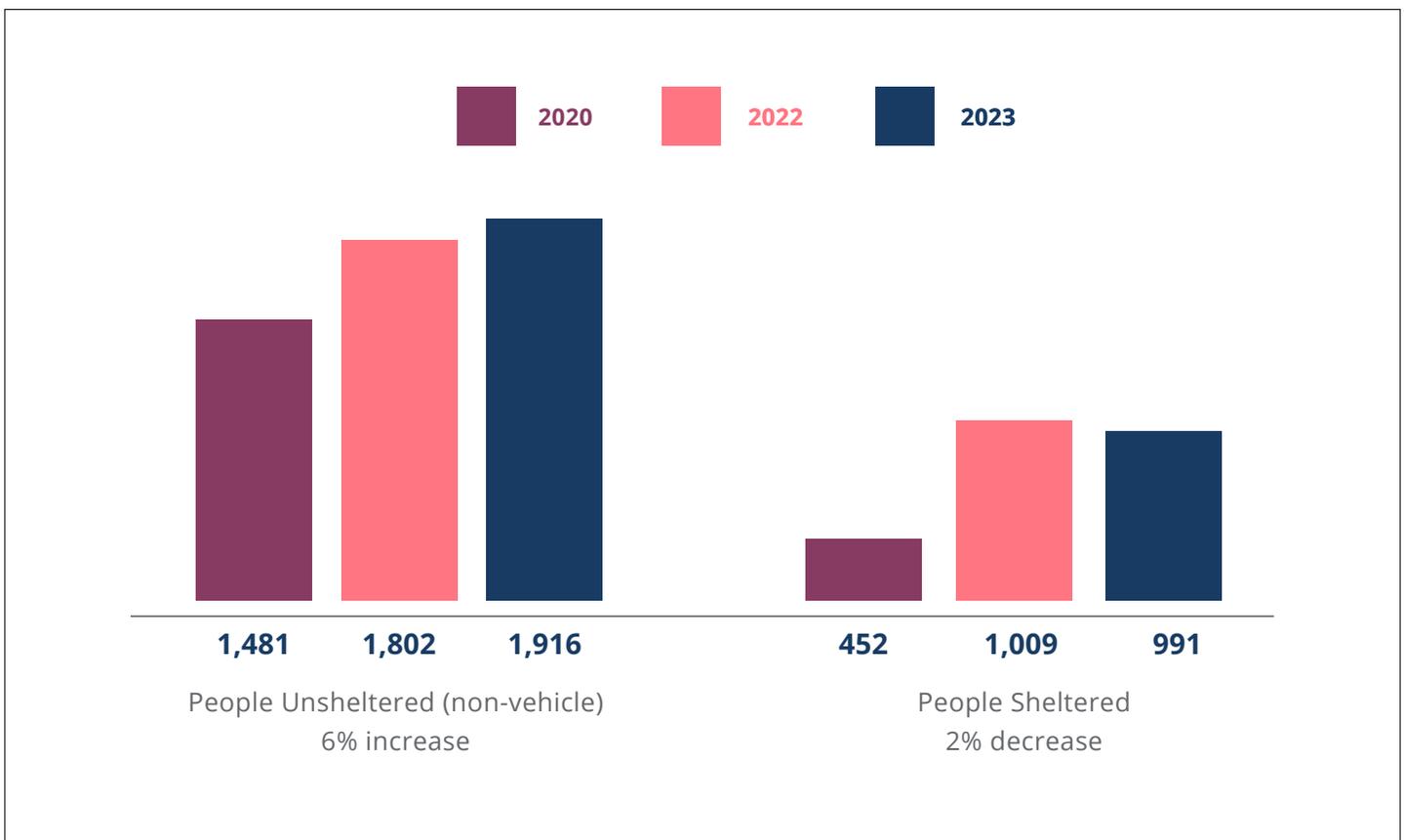


# Sheltered & Unsheltered

## 2023 Demographics & Survey Results



Overview of findings generated from the survey component of the 2023 Long Beach Homeless Point in Time Count & Survey



# Subpopulations experiencing homelessness

## Living In Vehicles



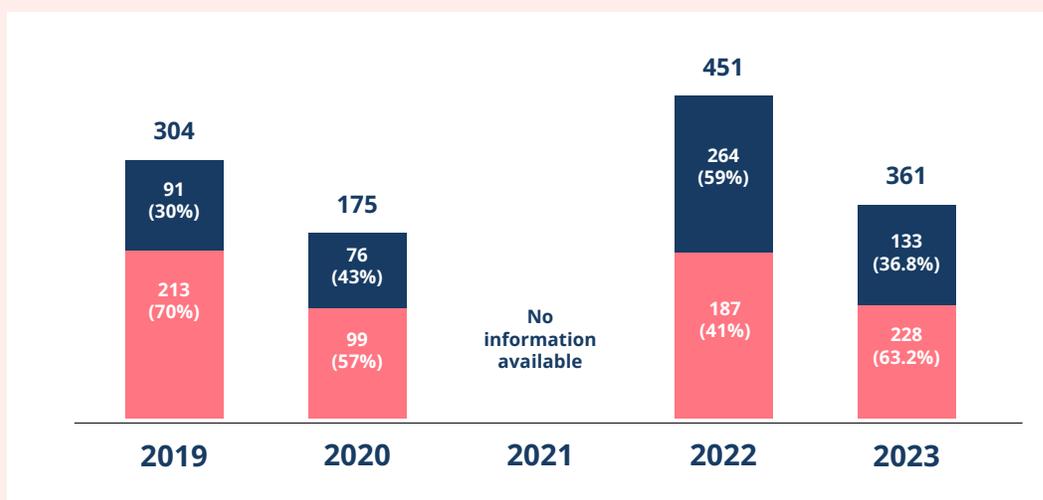
**540 (22%)**

of unsheltered people are living in a vehicle (car or RV)

## Veterans

■ Sheltered Vs.  
■ Unsheltered

20% decrease



## LGBTQ+



**10.7%**

2022

**11.2%**

2023

## Students



**4.9%**

2022



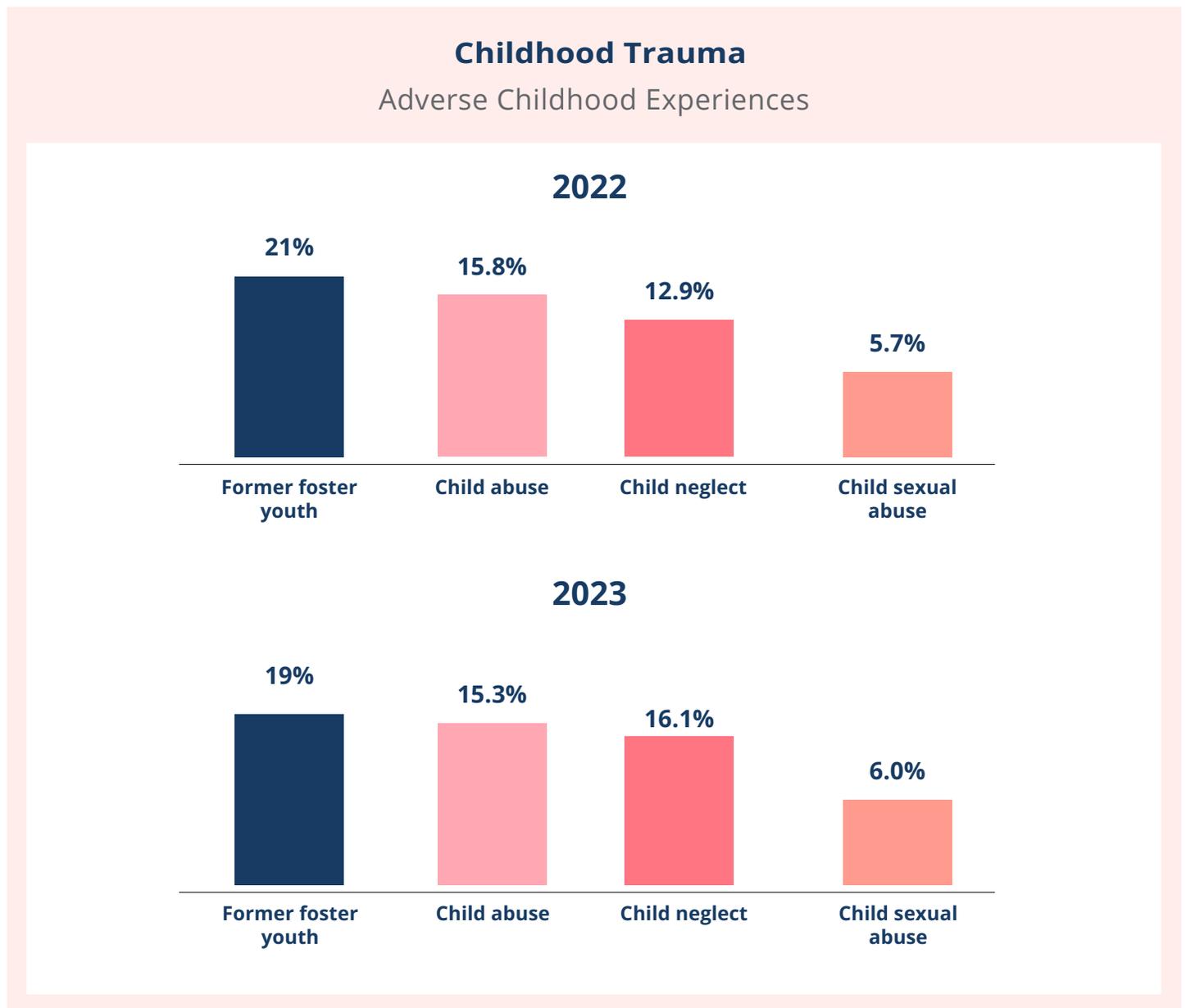
**7.4%**

2023

# The Underlying Conditions of Homelessness

## 2023 Demographics & Survey Results

Many people experiencing homelessness have underlying long-term trauma, mental health or substance use concerns or other health conditions, such as traumatic brain injury. These conditions impair cognitive functioning and makes living in unsupported housing and holding a job much more difficult.





Traumatic Brain  
Injury

**23.6%**



Developmental  
Disability

**20.8%**



Severe Mental  
Illness

**34.7%**



Substance Use  
Disorder

**31.8%**



Physical Disability

**34.5%**



Chronic Medical  
Condition

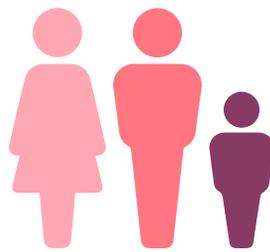
**28.2%**

# Causes of Homelessness

## 2023 Demographics & Survey Results

A critical component of addressing and preventing homelessness is better understanding the major causes behind it. People were asked to identify the leading causes of their homelessness. The following were the top causes reported by respondents.

### Family Disruption



**27%**

Said they became homeless due to family disruption or relationship problems

### Financial



**35%**

said they became homeless due to unemployment or financial reasons, a decrease of 9% from 2022.

### 2023



**27.7%**

**Family**



**35.4%**

**Unemployment**



**11.2%**

**Mental Health**



**16.3%**

**Eviction**



**9.8%**

**Substance Abuse**

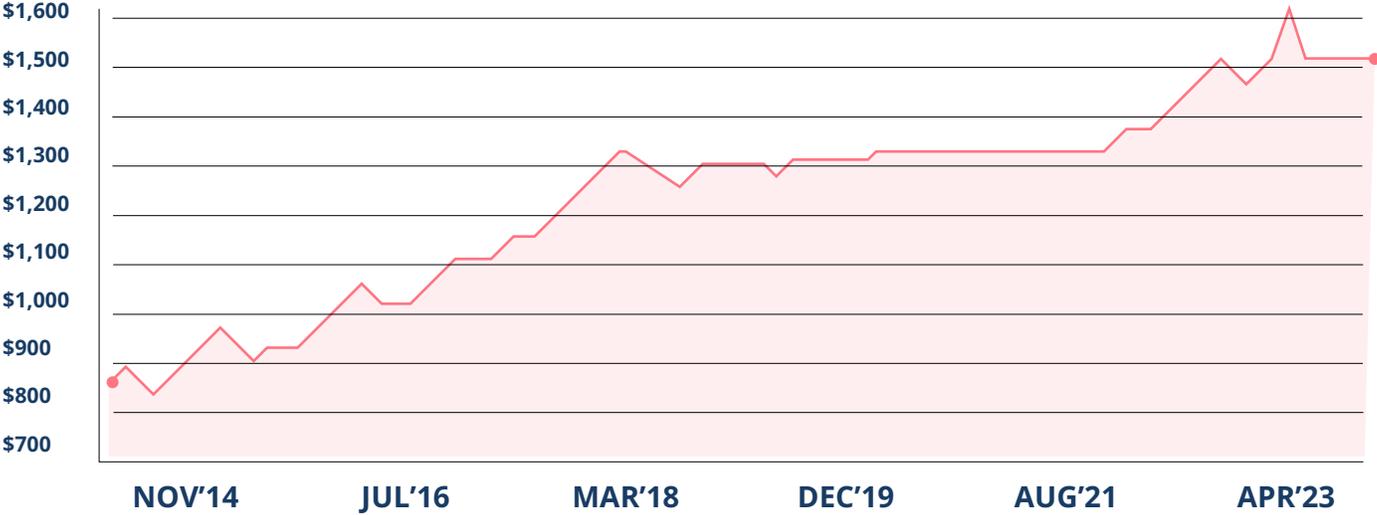


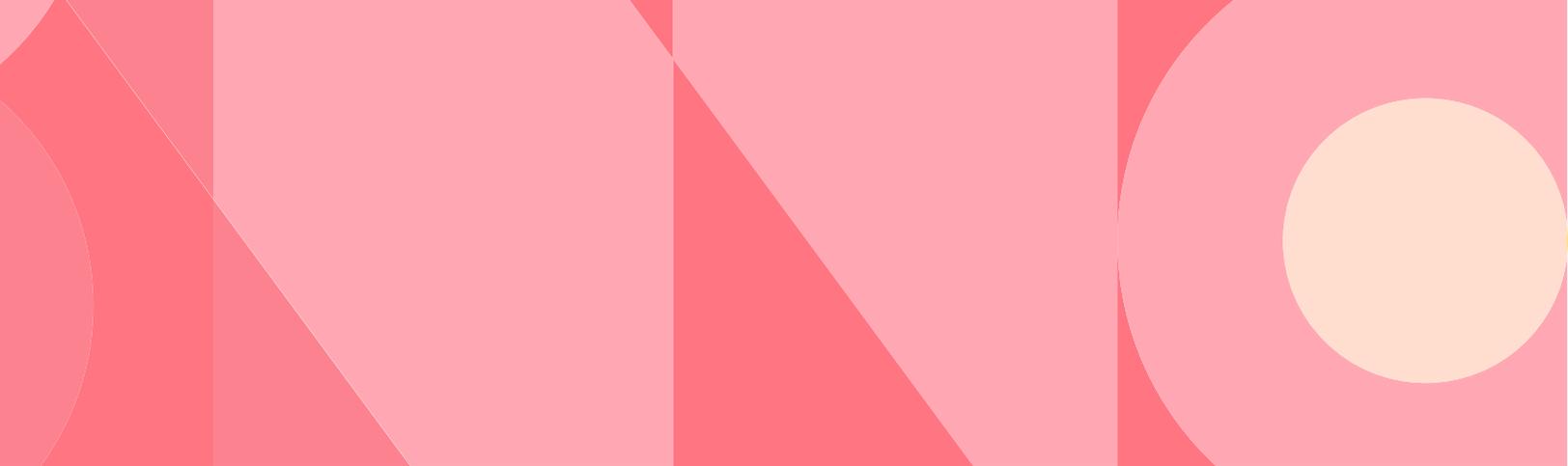
**6.5%**

**Disability**

Homelessness is, fundamentally, a lack of housing. City residents face ongoing issues, including low vacancy rates for units, high housing costs relative to income. The USC Lusk 2022 Multifamily Forecast Report found that the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim metro area has had faster rent growth than nearly everywhere, and on Dec. 15, 2022, the New York Times reported that Long Beach was the seventh least affordable market in the U.S.

### Cost to rent a studio apt.





# Count Methodology

# CLB Count Methodology for Data Collection

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The 2023 Count was conducted in the early hours of January 26, 2023, with the help of nearly 300 volunteers. Volunteers included members of community-based organizations and the business community, members of the public and City staff. Teams, led by experienced guides, fanned out on foot and by car conducting surveys of people experiencing homelessness throughout Long Beach. The number of volunteers participating is critical to ensuring the map segments that cover the entire City have comprehensive coverage. The PIT Count process is designed to ensure comprehensive coverage of the 52 square miles of Long Beach. In the days leading up to the PIT Count, outreach teams conducted a specialized count in areas that are hard to reach or have potential safety concerns. Hot spot guides provided maps of well-known areas of congregation for volunteer teams. On the morning of the PIT Count, teams were organized into small groups of three or four people. Volunteer teams were provided hygiene supplies and snacks to hand out as well as incentive gift cards for people completing the demographic survey.



The preparation, team design and incentives are all designed to maximize engagement with people who are unsheltered and are critical in getting an accurate count. Prior to the PIT Count, all volunteers were required to attend an orientation session that provided training for the survey on the electronic application, engagement techniques and recommendations for the survey process.

Training is a priority to ensure consistent data collection throughout all map areas, ensure safety practices in the field and to provide support to trained and experienced map leads. Teams sent out to the field were provided with a 20-question survey, which asked about demographic information, subpopulation information, length and circumstances of homeless experience, cause of homelessness, previous engagement in services; it also confirmed whether the person was counted visually or if a survey was conducted. The Homeless Services Bureau continues to improve the count data collection methodology to provide more insights to the population.

# CLB Count Methodology for Data Analysis



In 2023, PIT Count volunteers conducted an all-electronic count, using a custom-built application. The app allowed volunteers to gather survey responses and included a real-time map to track all of the teams. This allowed for a streamlined count process for collection and analysis. Additionally, use of an electronic application eliminated the potential of error in data interpretation and transfer from paper surveys. Another key data element of using the electronic application was the ability to geolocate the position of all surveys. This made administering and monitoring the count much easier and streamlined.

Once the unsheltered count concluded, data were compiled for analysis. For shelter programs, reports were generated from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and confirmed by the agency or generated by agencies that do not participate in HMIS. Through unique identifiers created by key demographic questions, any flagged duplicative surveys were removed.

To improve the accuracy of recorded visual counts, additional surveying was conducted by outreach staff to estimate the rate of user error as well as estimate the frequency that there might be multiple people living within a car, van and RV. These were then used to make final adjustments of visual account numbers to get the most accurate estimate possible. Demographics for the portion of visual counts was based upon sampling and the demographic surveys completed.

The Long Beach Count methodology and analysis was based upon best practices incorporated throughout the country as well as lessons learned from past PIT Counts. There are significant challenges that exist with capturing how many people are experiencing homelessness and Long Beach continues to find ways to improve and ensure our estimate is as accurate as possible.



# Looking Forward

# Looking Forward

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Addressing the issue of homelessness is a leading priority for the City. On Jan. 10, 2023, the Long Beach City Council proclaimed a state of emergency for homelessness in Long Beach. Since then, the City has established an Incident Command Structure, led jointly by the Health Department and Public Works Department and comprised of nine work groups consisting of more than 145 City staff to take on the various aspects of homelessness emergency response and taking several notable actions to tackle the homelessness crisis.



The City's Mobile Access Center (MAC) extended its outreach efforts in different areas of the city. This enables staff to conduct meaningful engagement and start the intake process right on the street. To date, the MAC has 921 recorded engagements with people experiencing homelessness, and of those engagements, services have been provided to over 500 people, including referral and transport to shelter, enrollment into the homeless services system, connections to community resources and basic medical services.



Long Beach is continuing to support people who are unhoused and currently sheltering in vehicles. The City last month expanded its Safe Parking Program, which provides a safe, dignified environment for people to park overnight while receiving access to basic needs and being connected to services. The City also continues to operate a sanitation and water-filling site for people experiencing homelessness and living in recreational vehicles, allowing people to properly dispose of sewage and access clean water and filling stations.

The City also launched a new Long Beach Homelessness Text Alert program to connect residents who are unhoused with housing and support services and other resources. The new communications method will enhance the City's existing outreach by providing timely updates directly to people needing the services, as research indicates a significant number of people experiencing homelessness have cell phones. This additional method of outreach will increase the City's direct access to these individuals and connect even more to housing and support services. Those interested in signing up to receive text notifications can text keyword "HOME" to 99411.

And a new data dashboard was unveiled in March 2023 showcasing local homelessness data, including demographics of people experiencing homelessness and data on the various housing and support services offered by the City. The dashboard is being used to further inform the City's ongoing efforts to address the homelessness crisis and support the City's mission to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Long Beach by increasing housing opportunities, enhancing current initiatives and addressing and improving overall public safety for the entire community.

# Additional findings and analysis in 2023

## Point in Time Count

### Mental Health

The point in time count from 2022 revealed a large increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness with serious mental health conditions. This trend continues into 2023 where mental health concerns remains the most common disabling condition affecting the homeless population of Long Beach. We provide additional analyses on this group of individuals in order to better understand who they are and what might be done to improve the state of mental health among the population experiencing homelessness.

*Childhood trauma is associated with mental health issues and with the severity of an individual's experience with homelessness.*

Respondents who identified as having experienced trauma during their childhood were 47% more likely to have serious mental health issues, and 34% more likely to be chronically homeless than individuals without childhood trauma.

*Veterans experiencing homelessness are more likely to struggle with mental health issues than their non-veteran counterparts.*

Veterans surveyed in the homeless count were 34% more likely to identify a serious mental health issue than non-veterans. Veterans were no more likely to identify with any other disabling condition.

The association between chronicity and mental health demonstrates the powerful relationship between how long an individual experiences homelessness and their overall well-being. We believe this relationship warrants a broader discussion about how we may prevent people from falling into homelessness in the first place, and how this prevention may help to improve the overall well-being of our populace.

### Newly Homeless

In the 2023 count, 204 people (19%) said it was their first time homeless and they had been homeless for less than a year. We focused on these newly homeless to provide insights into which populations are currently at greatest risk of losing their housing. There is a shift in demographics when comparing newly homeless to the overall homeless count. We see more Latinx and Asian/Pacific Islander community, more woman, more students, and fewer veterans.

*In addition, the newly homeless are more likely to be victims of domestic violence, than the rest of the homeless population.*

A newly homeless respondent is more than 6 times as likely to list domestic violence as a cause of their homelessness than someone who is not newly homeless (43% vs. 7% respectively). Compared to the overall homeless population, the newly homeless are more likely to identify as women or as gender non-binary.

*The newly homeless access shelters at a higher rate than the general homeless population.*

Several shelters across Long Beach are dedicated to serving victims of domestic violence. This may explain why the newly homeless are more likely to be sheltered (54%) than the general homeless population (29%).



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Visit us at [www.longbeach.gov](http://www.longbeach.gov)

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