



FY2021 Data Snapshot



City of Philadelphia
Office of Homeless Services



Introduction

The mission of the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) is to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring in Philadelphia. We fulfill this mission by providing the leadership, planning, coordination, and mobilization of resources to an extensive system of homelessness prevention, emergency, temporary and long-term housing services to those facing imminent or literal homelessness.

Guided by our strategic plan, [The Roadmap to Homes](#), our community is working on five priorities to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. One of these priorities is *Implement Transparent and Inclusive Quality Improvement Process*. This 2021 Data Snapshot is a foundational element in fulfilling this priority. It is only with high quality and consistent data that we can identify trends, highlight outcomes, assess gaps, and direct our efforts to best meet the needs of the community. To that end, the Office of Homeless Services works tirelessly with its community partners to address data quality concerns, ensures grantees use Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or when applicable, a comparable database and provides training and technical assistance to end-users to ensure that the data collected is comprehensive and accurately reflects those served.

In FY2021, the global pandemic brought the world to a halt. COVID-19 magnified the vulnerabilities that homeless individuals experience in new ways, highlighting the important connection between housing and healthcare. Throughout the pandemic, the homeless services system stayed open to address these ongoing vulnerabilities plus the new needs that COVID-19 exposed. Our system serviced the unsheltered while maintaining safety protocols in our shelters, isolation and quarantine sites, to keep staff and participants safe. All the while, we adapted to CDC guidelines as we developed HMIS screening testing and tracked vaccination status in HMIS. Going forward, our data collection won't just inform us who we serve, but also how our system recovers from the pandemic. From tracking new data elements to monitoring the impact of stimulus funding and racial equity, our system is continually growing to meet the needs of our community.



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Impact of COVID-19 on Philadelphia Continuum of Care Operations

During the Fiscal Year (FY), the Philadelphia Continuum of Care (CoC) along with the rest of the world was hit with the global pandemic known as the Coronavirus (COVID-19) which had a direct impact on how the CoC addressed was able to support and assist those experiencing homelessness. On March 6, 2020, in response to COVID-19, the Governor of Pennsylvania issued a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency, and on March 17, 2020, the Mayor of Philadelphia and the City's Health Commissioner issued a "stay-at-home" order that placed critical restrictions on social and commercial activity to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

To address and mitigate the risk of COVID-19 for people experiencing homelessness, the following changes were implemented by the Office of Homeless Services.

People experiencing homelessness who met the criteria below were offered placement in a non-congregate shelter in one of two COVID Prevention Spaces located first in downtown hotels and later moved to community-based locations. OHS also added three Single Room Occupancy (SRO) programs with a total of 54 beds to expand the stock of non-congregate shelter to keep high risk people safe.

- Age 65 or older
- Age 60+ and with an underlying health condition such as chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immunocompromised, severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, and liver disease determined by the CDC has being at high risk for COVID
- Living in a congregate setting or would be placed in a congregate setting (unsheltered)

Shelters were restructured to ensure social distancing, and additional safety practices were put in place, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), grab and go meals, sanitizer, COVID screening at intake and frequent cleaning. Once COVID testing became more widely available, it was offered to the shelters and intake. Vaccines are offered to shelter residents since they have become available as well.

The Roadmap to Homes Continuum of Care Board adopted changes in the prioritization of permanent housing units during COVID-19 through the Coordinated Entry and Assessment-Based Housing and Referral System (CEA-BHRS) process. They prioritized Rapid Re-housing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) openings for people who are at a higher risk of developing COVID-19 symptoms, including those who are 65 and older or anyone with an underlying medical condition as specified by the CDC until the threat of COVID-19 has been neutralized. The City made the commitment that people from the COVID Prevention Spaces and SROS would not be returned to congregate sites or the street. To date, 180 of these participants have been housed in long-term affordable units.

Additional information on OHS response: [Responding to the COVID Pandemic: Fall 2020 Progress Report](#)

These changes do not supersede funding and eligibility requirements.

Ultimately, these provisions have been largely successful in saving lives and keeping people safe. The shelter system provided emergency housing to 9,571 people with a total of 255 known cases for the fiscal year – a 2.7% COVID-19 infection rate.ⁱ

Making Homelessness Rare, Brief and Non-recurring

The Office of Homeless Services tracks its progress towards ending homelessness by measuring the number of people entering the homeless system for the first time (rare), the length of time someone experiences homelessness (brief), and the number of people who return to homelessness after exiting the system (non-recurring). These measures are described in our [Roadmap to Homes, Philadelphia’s Five Year Strategic Plan for the Homeless Assistance System](#), and align with the national goals for addressing homelessness established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

GOAL: MAKE HOMELESSNESS RARE

METRIC: NUMBER OF PERSONS ENTERING AN EMERGENCY SHELTER, SAFE HAVEN, TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OR PERMANENT HOUSING FOR THE FIRST TIME

FY20	FY21
68%	64%
9,313 (68%) of the 13,632 persons who entered a project in FY20 were entering a housing assistance project for the first time	7,152 (64%) of the 11,221 persons who entered a project in FY21 were entering a housing assistance project for the first time

Our goal to make homelessness rare starts with aiding households at-risk of experiencing homelessness by emphasizing prevention and diversion strategies and building partnerships with a diverse array of organizations to effectively allocate resources. Through prevention and diversion, the Office of Homeless Services helps households maintain their current housing or identify and create new pathways to housing, while connecting households to services and supports that provide direct assistance. Aligning these efforts helps at-risk households attain housing stability while preserving scarce housing resources.

In an effort to strengthen prevention and diversion practices, the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) increased its support for prevention and diversion assistance in FY21. As a result, **1,873 households received prevention or diversion assistance**. Between FY20 and FY21, OHS reported a decrease in the number of persons experiencing homelessness for the first time by 4%.

GOAL: MAKE HOMELESSNESS BRIEF

METRIC: AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIME (DAYS) IN AN EMERGENCY SHELTER, SAFE HAVEN OR TRANSITIONAL PROJECT FOR ALL PERSONS

FY20	FY21
157 days	170 days
Average length of time participants are enrolled in emergency shelter, safe haven or transitional housing (median length of stay = 68 days)	Average length of time participants are enrolled in an emergency shelter, safe haven or transitional housing (median length of stay = 71 days)



The average length of stay in emergency shelter, safe haven and transitional housing projects indicates the homeless system’s ability to move people out of homelessness. It can also measure the system’s ability to embrace the Housing First Approach, which strives to move people into housing as quickly as possible by removing barriers for households entering housing assistance projects.

The average length of stay increased by 8% for temporary housing and is mostly a reflection of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the overall system. Although not one single program ceased operating due to the pandemic, and programs innovated remote operations to continue to provide service, the pandemic did result in some system slowdowns. Due to the economic impact of the pandemic, time extensions were granted in the TH and RRH programs, reducing the number of new units available through turnover. There were some disruptions in operations such as challenges in completing paperwork remotely which also may have contributed to longer periods between housing enrollment and move in. The eviction moratorium and increase in housing cost have made it a challenge to locate private rental units also contributing to longer stays.

GOAL: MAKE HOMELESSNESS NON-RECURRING

METRIC: NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO EXITED TO PERMANENT HOUSING DESTINATION IN THE PAST TWO YEARS AND RETURNED TO HOMELESSNESS

FY20	FY21
82%	80%
of participants who exited a project for a permanent housing destination did not return to homelessness	of participants who exited a project for a permanent housing destination did not return to homelessness

To track the community’s progress towards making homelessness non-recurring, the Office of Homeless Services tracks the number of persons who exited to a permanent housing destination and then re-entered a housing assistance project. The goal of this measure is to see people exit the system and not return, thereby reducing overall homelessness. Essentially, we ask, what percentage of people exit the system and move to Permanent Housing after being homeless end up experiencing homelessness again in the next 24 months? From FY20 to FY21, this percentage declined by 2%. This measure provides the percent of people who stably and successfully exited homelessness.

Similar to the previous measure, this measure, was also affected by COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic destabilized the economy and had a disproportionate impact on communities of color and communities already struggling to overcome systemic poverty. The increase in returns to homelessness is not as severe as it could have been in part due to the eviction moratorium, plus prevention and diversion funding. As the moratorium expires, the Office of Homeless Services continues to advocate for more permanent housing resources and will continue to provide prevention and diversion assistance to those at risk of homelessness.

Additional Performance Measures

The Office of Homeless Services tracks additional performance measures that relate to and support the community’s mission of making homelessness brief, rare and non-recurring. For example, employment and income growth is closely related to a household’s ability to remain stably housed and is therefore tracked to better understand the community’s progress towards making homelessness non-recurring. The chart below reviews the income reported during a person’s exit compared to the income they reported during their enrollment.

Between FY20 and FY21, there was a 6% decrease in the percent of persons receiving earned and non-employment income who exited from a project funded by the Continuum of Care. The observed decrease can largely be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and its continued impact on local economy.ⁱⁱ At the onset of the pandemic, businesses, childcare facilities, and schools closed, and the City shut down. Unemployment rates in Philadelphia reached a historic high rate of 18%. “Black and Hispanic residents of Philadelphia were two and three times more likely than White residents, respectively, to lose jobs and income...”ⁱⁱⁱ Such devastating COVID-19 prevention measures undoubtedly impacted the income of most vulnerable populations who are served by OHS.

INCOME CHANGE: ADULTS WHO EXITED*

	FY20	FY21
Number of adults who exited a project (leavers)	669	699
Leavers with increased earned income	115 (17%)	89 (13%)
Leavers with increased non-employment cash income	208 (31%)	207 (30%)
Total leavers with any increase in income (earned + non-employment income)	295 (44%)	265 (38%)

Note: This chart reports on data collected from projects that were funding by the Continuum of Care only. More information on the Continuum of Care can be found at <http://philadelphiaofficeofhomelesservices.org/about-us/continuum-of-care/>

One of the key indicators of success for housing projects is the percent of exits to a permanent housing destination. Examples of permanent housing destinations include moving into a rental unit, moving in with friends or family, or entering a permanent housing project. In FY21, 28% of all persons who were enrolled in Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, Transitional Housing or Rapid Rehousing projects exited to a permanent housing destination. The overall number of exits is less than the previous year (2,650 in FY20 compared to 2,269 in FY21), but the percentage of successful exits increased in FY21. The increase in move-ins is in part due to OHS sustained support during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as waivers of certain regulatory requirements which lowered barriers and suspended certain requirements which enabled participants to move into permanent housing.

EXITS TO PERMANENT HOUSING

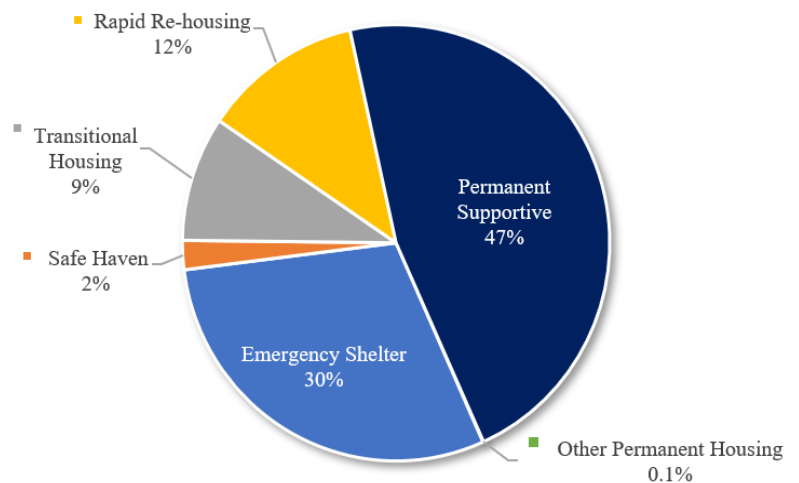
	FY20	FY21
Persons in Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, Transitional Housing and Rapid Rehousing	10,308	7,999
Of those, who exited to a permanent housing destination	2,650	2,269
Successful Exits	26%	28%

Housing Inventory Count

The HIC (Housing Inventory Count) is an inventory of the emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing beds dedicated exclusively to people experiencing homelessness that are available in Philadelphia during the January Point-in-Time Count. It is designed to quantify the community’s capacity to serve persons experiencing homelessness, and it can be used to determine the need for the additional projects for populations that are under-served. HIC numbers are based on the HUD definition that limits the unit count to homeless dedicated. OHS often uses permanent housing opportunities to augment those that are not captured in the HIC, including PSH Blueprint for Singles and Families, HUD Multi-Family, DHCD Set-Aside, FUP Vouchers, and Mainstream Vouchers.

In Philadelphia’s homeless assistance system, of 11,426 total beds, 30% of beds are emergency, temporary shelter; 2% are Safe Haven; 9% are for projects with longer stays that are intended to lead to independent living (Transitional Housing); and 59% of these beds are dedicated to permanent housing (Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing). Plus, an additional 469 permanent housing units are also included in OHS’s portfolio, but not identified in the HIC due to definition.

Percent of Total Beds by Project Type 2021



2018-2021 HOUSING INVENTORY COUNT: BEDS AVAILABLE YEAR-ROUND

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Emergency Shelter	3,465	3,725	3,878	3,392
Safe Haven	255	254	254	247
Transitional Housing	1,244	1,129	1,090	1,061
Rapid Re-housing	1,176	1,111	1,236	1,379

Permanent Supportive Housing	4,940	5,158	5,131	5,341
Other Permanent Housing				6

2018-2021 HOUSING INVENTORY COUNT: BEDS AVAILABLE BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven and Transitional Housing				
Beds for Adult Only Households	2,570	2,881	3,006	2,832
Beds for Households with Children & Adults	2,353	2,208	2,193	1,860
Beds for Households with Children Only	41	19	23	8
Permanent Supportive Housing				
Beds for Adult Only Households	2,584	2,998	2,940	3,166
Beds for Households with Children & Adults	2,356	2,160	2,191	2,175

2021 PROJECTS NOT INCLUDED IN THE HOUSING INVENTORY COUNT

Non-HIC Projects	# of Units	Source
Permanent Housing - Housing only programs		
DHCD Set-Aside	11	Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers	75	Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA)
PSH Blueprint Singles	21	Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA)
PSH Blueprint Families	37	Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA)
HUD Multi-Family	0	Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA)
Mainstream Vouchers	325	Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA)

Point-in-Time Count

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is an annual count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. It provides the homeless assistance community with data needed to understand the number and characteristics of persons who are experiencing homelessness. This year, in response to the pandemic, OHS utilized a hybrid model to conduct the count, which was approved by HUD. The count had limited physical interaction to ensure the health and safety of all participants, based on CDC, local, and HUD COVID-19 guidelines.^{iv} This hybrid model included an observational count, canvassing in Kensington, Center City, eight Come and Be Counted sites, and a TeleCount covering the entire City of Philadelphia.

- ▶ **Unsheltered population** includes persons sleeping in any location not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans, such as on the streets, transportation centers, public parks, abandoned buildings or cars.^v
- ▶ **Sheltered population** includes persons experiencing homelessness that are staying in an emergency shelter, safe haven or transitional housing project.

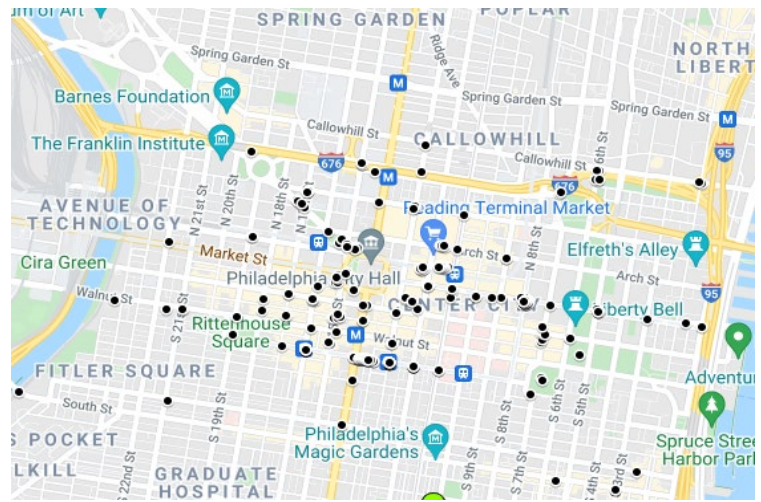
2021 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Total Persons	3,602	700	4,302
Total Children (Under 18)	909	0	909
Total Youth (Ages 18 to 24)	257	31	288
Total Adults (Over 24)	2,436	669	3,105

Between 2017 and 2021 the total number of unsheltered persons counted during the Point-in-Time Count has seen an 2% average increase. However, over the last three years there was a 13% average decline in the unsheltered population. The total number of sheltered declined over the last 5 years. Overall, in 2021, both sheltered and unsheltered populations saw 24% decline as compared to the 2020 PIT count.

2021 PIT COUNT: UNSHELTERED INDIVIDUALS SURVEYED IN CENTER CITY

For this year, the PIT Count was held on the night of Wednesday, January 27th from midnight to 4:00 am. The map to the right shows the location of unsheltered persons who were sleeping on the streets, or in either Suburban Station or 30th Street Station. In the Center City area, defined here as south of Spring Garden, north of South Street, and bordered by the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, there were a total of 278 individuals counted. Since 2017, the total number of persons experiencing homelessness has decreased by 24% (-1,391 people). This reduction is both due to a decrease in the number of persons in shelter and unsheltered persons. The number of unsheltered persons continued to decrease since 2019 with a notably sharp decrease (27%) in 2021.



2021 PIT COUNT: UNSHELTERED INDIVIDUALS SURVEYED IN KENSINGTON

The Kensington area saw a substantial increase from the previous year’s count. The area continues to be the epicenter of an opioid epidemic, which greatly increases street homeless presence. The main areas where there was an increase were McPherson Square, Kensington Avenue, Lehigh Avenue, and Allegheny Avenue. Additional services along Kensington Avenue, such as hand washing stations, mobile restrooms, and meal distribution sites, along with other COVID-related services, may have attributed to the overall increase in these areas. There was a 22% increase in the number of Unsheltered in Kensington for FY21 compared to FY20.

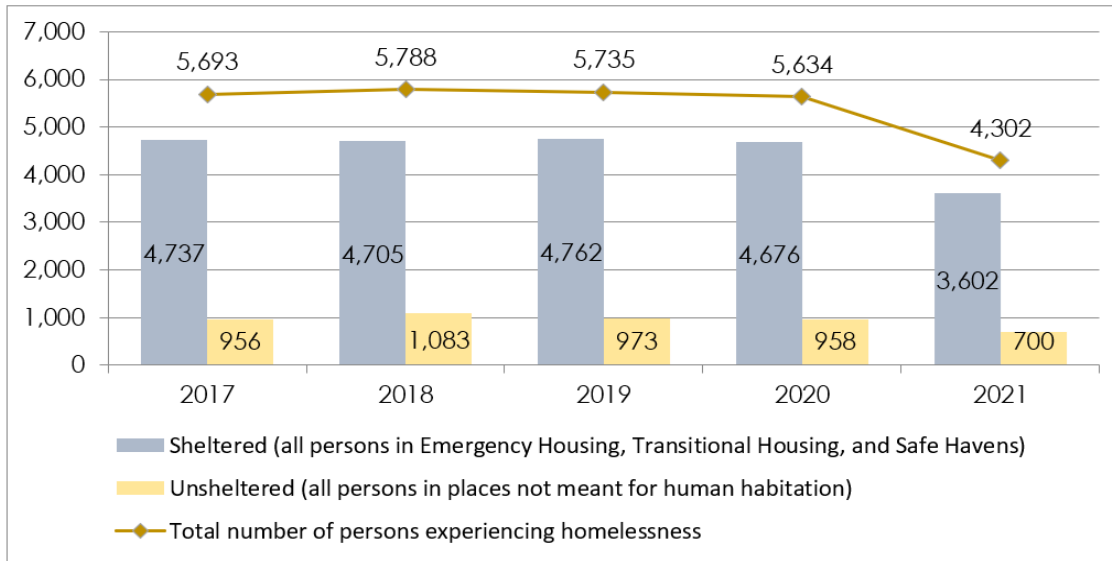
KENSINGTON QUARTERLY UNSHELTERED STREET COUNT

Seasonal Count	2019	2020	2021
Winter (Jan)	286	201	245
Spring (May)	173	261	359
Summer (August)	242	353	TBD
Fall (Nov)	154	No count due to COVID	TBD

UNSHELTERED KENSINGTON PIT COUNT COMPARISON TO UNSHELTERED CITYWIDE PIT COUNT

Seasonal Count	2019	2020	2021
Unsheltered-Kensington (PIT)	286	201	245
Unsheltered-Citywide (PIT)	973	958	700
% of Unsheltered in Kensington (PIT)	29%	21%	35%

2017-2021 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT TRENDS



For households with at least one child and one adult, the sheltered count has decreased by 42% (-351 households) since 2017, and from 2018 to 2021, the unsheltered count remained at zero. In 2021, The number of households without children saw a 22% decrease for both sheltered and unsheltered households combined, a continued improvement from the steady increase from 2017 to 2019.

HOUSEHOLDS REPORTED 2017-2021 POINT-IN-TIME COUNTS

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Sheltered Households	3,199	3,237	3,426	3,335	2,625
Households without children	2,352	2,474	2,754	2,709	2,148
Households with adults and children	825	744	663	612	474
Households with only children	22	19	9	14	3
Unsheltered Households	943	1,083	973	958	693
Households without children	938	1,066	967	947	693
Households with adults and children	1	0	0	0	0
Households with only children	4	17	6	11	0
Total Households	4,142	4,320	4,399	4,293	3,318

To be considered chronically homeless, a person must have a disabling condition and their homeless experience must be at least one year long; or during the last three years they must have at least four occasions of homelessness that equal one year in length. In the 2021 PIT Count, the total number of chronically homeless persons decreased by 19% as compared to 2020 PIT Count. The largest decrease was among the unsheltered population most likely driven by the global COVID-19 pandemic and other factors such as additional shelter resources deployed on the night of the count due to Code Blue and resources from COVID Prevention hotels.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT: CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

	Emergency Shelter	Safe Haven	Unsheltered	Total	% Change from previous year (2020)
Chronically Homeless Individuals	657	116	160	933	-19% ↓

Several population subgroups are considered by HUD to be more vulnerable. This includes persons who are chronically homeless, unaccompanied youth (18 to 24 years old), and veterans. Of the subpopulations identified in the table below, persons experiencing a severe mental illness and chronic substance abuse are the most represented. Both of these populations’ percentage of the adult population saw an increase from last year’s Point-in-Time Count. During the 2020 Count, 39.6% of all adults reported a mental illness, and in 2021 that percentage increased to 45.4% (excludes unsheltered). For substance use disorder, the percentage increased only slightly from 33.3% in 2020 to 33.5% (excludes unsheltered) in 2021.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT: SUBPOPULATIONS

	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total	% of Adult Population (3,393 adults)
Unaccompanied Youth (18-24)	132	31	163	4.8%
Parenting Youth (18-24)	104	0	104	3.1%
Veterans	197	55	252	7.4%
Mental Illness	1,222	N/A*	1,222	45.4%
Substance Use Disorder	901	N/A*	901	33.5%
Persons with HIV/AIDS	100	N/A*	100	3.7%
Adults fleeing domestic violence	202	N/A*	202	7.5%

Note: Unsheltered subpopulations not surveyed due to COVID-19. Percent of Adults denominator for these groups excludes unsheltered adults.

Total Persons Served

The Office of Homeless Services records and tracks the number of persons served after each fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th). The tables in this section are based on the total number of persons who enrolled in each project type. Persons with enrollments in multiple project types are reported once for each project type. In FY21, there were a total of 14,849 unique persons served in all project types. This represents a 26% decrease from the previous year. COVID-19 pandemic most likely had a significant impact on this year's data. However, there are insufficient amounts of studies to conclusively attribute possible shifts in homelessness or the effects that historically unprecedented measures to address the COVID-19 crises (ex. CARES Act) may have had on homelessness and Continuums of Care across the nation.



TOTAL PERSONS SERVED BY PROJECT TYPE FY20 - 21

	Overflow (After Hours & Winter Initiative)	Emergency Shelter	Safe Haven	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Permanent Supportive
FY21	2,905	6,666	138	675	2,535	3,195
FY20	5,445	8,206	703	1,287	2,608	4,059

Note: Persons are reported in each project type that they enrolled in. Persons with multiple enrollments are counted in each project type.

Identifying the type of households served in crisis housing can be challenging as family structures are able to change for various reasons, such as children aging or individuals leaving a household. The total households reported above are based on the most recent enrollment reported. A total of 5,329 persons in a household with at least one adult and child were served in FY21, with an average household size of 3 people.

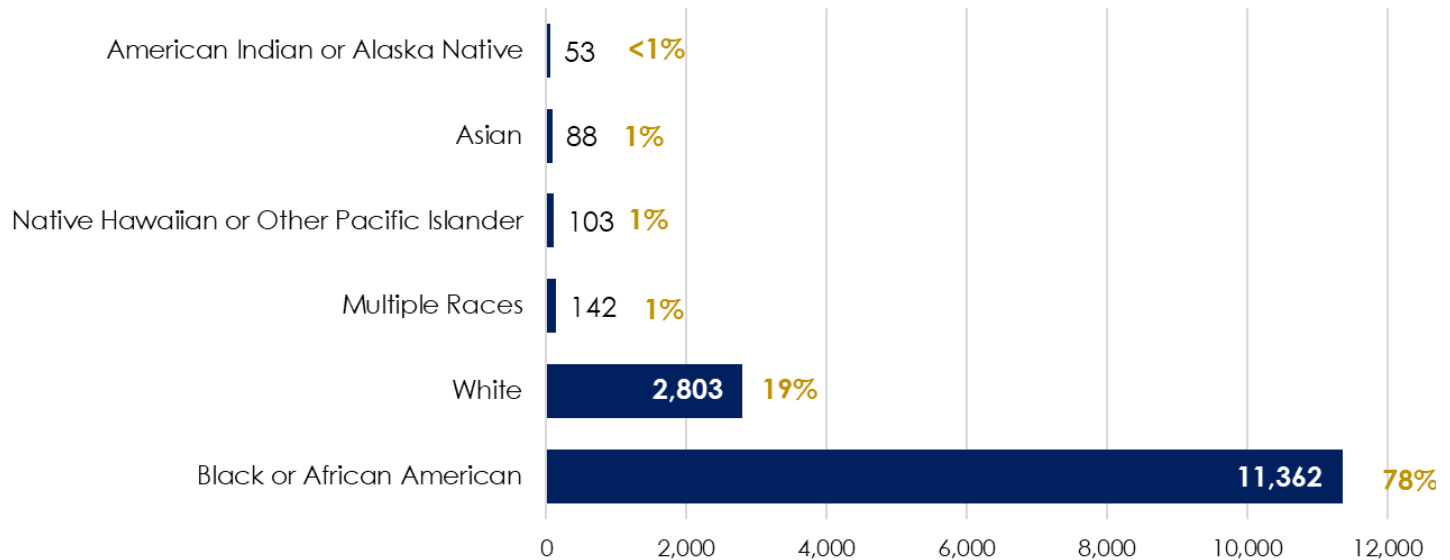
HOUSEHOLDS SERVED IN FY21

	Families	Adults Only	Child Only	Total Households
Total Households	1,734	9,299	59	11,090
Total Persons in Households	5,329	9,461	59	14,849

Note: For the purposes of this report, Families are households with at least one Adult and one Child (less than 18 years old). In Adult Only households, all members are over 18 years old, and Child Only households are those where all members are under 18 years of age.

RACE & ETHNICITY OF ALL PERSONS FY21

For the past three decades, studies have shown that African American people are overrepresented in the U.S. homeless population.^{vi} Reviewing the cumulated results from last year’s Point-in-Time count shows that nationally, four in ten people experiencing homelessness were African American, whereas in the general population, African American people represent one in ten.^{vii}^{viii} This trend is also evident in Philadelphia, where African American people represent 78% of the persons served in housing crisis and assistance programs in FY21, but only 42% of the city’s general population.^{ix}



Note: Excludes the 298 (2%) persons with Client Refused, Client Doesn’t Know, Data Not Collected selected for Race.

As previously mentioned, one of the key indicators of success for housing projects is the percent of exits to a permanent housing destination. A review of exits by race shows that those who identify as Black or African American and Multiple races had a higher successful exit rate, 31% and 39% respectively, than the overall system (28%). Other groups, such as those who identified as White, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, and American Indian or Alaska Native had lower percent of exits to permanent destination as compared to the system.

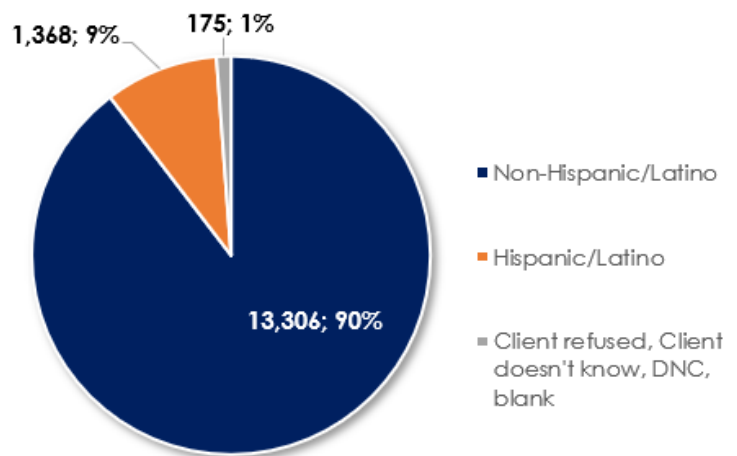
EXIT DESTINATIONS BY RACE IN FY21

Exit Destination	Black or African American	White	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Multiple Races	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native
Temporary Destination	1,008	250	19	13	9	6
Permanent Destination	1,780	340	15	24	13	6
Institutional Settings	50	30	2			
Other Destinations	2,855	885	40	25	31	16
Successful Exits	31%	23%	20%	39%	25%	21%
Total	5,693	1,505	76	62	53	28

Note: Excludes the 227 exited persons with Client Refused, Client Doesn’t Know, Data Not Collected selected for Race.

Philadelphia CoC is committed to ensuring delivery of services to the most vulnerable populations within a racially equitable framework. In addition to breaking down data by race and ethnicity to better understand service delivery to minority populations, in 2020, OHS conducted a Racial Inequity Analysis of the system in order to identify any disparities in the delivery of services. As the result of the analysis, RtH Board voted to establish a standing Racial Equity Committee that would help bring an equity lens to the system and ensure that progress is being made in creating a system that promotes racial equity. The Committee includes persons with lived experience, diversity and equity experts, providers, government departments, researchers, and community members.

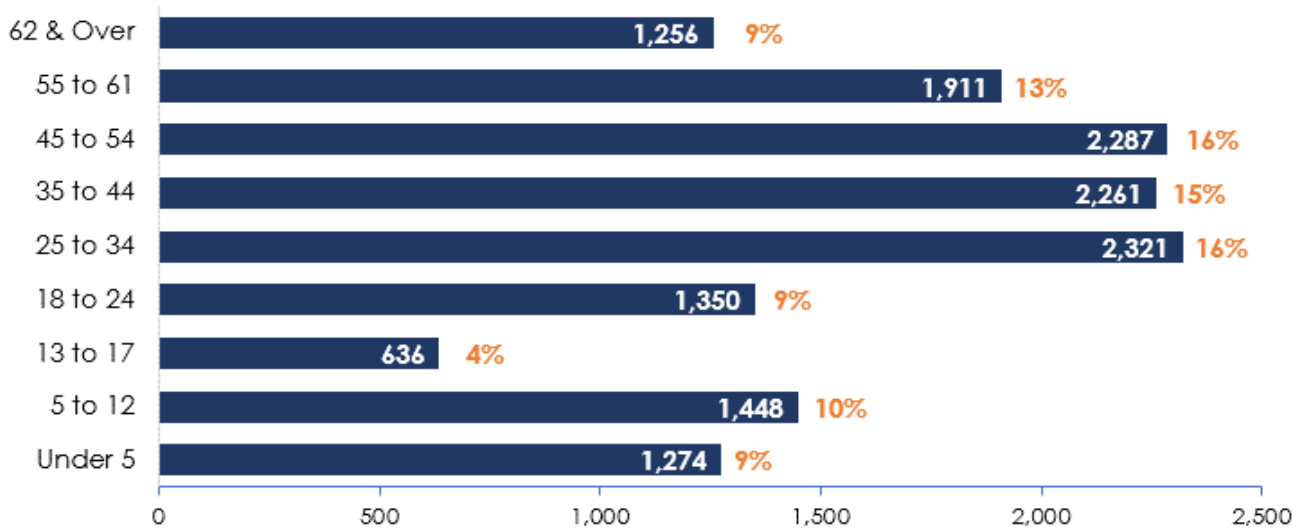
The share of the U.S. population identifying as Hispanic/Latinx (18% of U.S. population), are also overrepresented within the homeless population, representing 23% of persons experiencing homelessness.^x In Philadelphia, 15% of the general population identified as Hispanic/Latinx, but in the housing assistance programs, this group represented 9% of the population served.^{xi} This may be due to the increase in funding for Hispanic/Latinx Homelessness Prevention providers which in FY21 accounted for 37% of funding allocations for Homelessness Prevention at OHS. People who are Latinx/Hispanic are also less likely to use standard homeless sleeping arrangements (shelters, churches, etc.) and more likely to be in crowded, inadequate housing or “doubling up.”^{xii} This may consequentially, exclude them from accessing homeless assistance programs, which focus on serving persons who are homeless according to the definition provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.



To that end, the Office of Homeless Services has worked to tailor services to Hispanic/Latinx population in several ways over the past three years by: 1) providing a suite of homelessness prevention services that do not require people to meet the definition of literally homeless to get rental assistance; 2) providing more culturally competent Spanish language services in community organizations that already serve the Latinx community; 3) nesting the range of homeless assessment, referral and emergency housing services within housing counseling agencies in the Latinx community; 4) expanding the network of homeless services providers in the Latinx community to build capacity and increase availability; 5) supporting innovative practices, programs and policies designed to meet the unique needs of this population.

AGE OF ALL PERSONS SERVED IN FY21

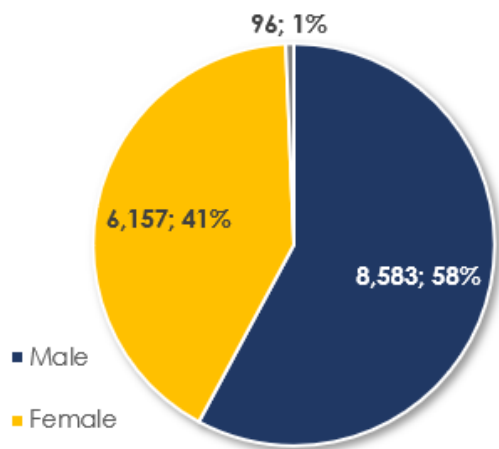
The average age of all persons served in projects in FY21 was 35 years old, which remained the same average age in FY20, but higher than the average reported for the previous years (33 in 2019; 31 in 2018; 29 in 2017). Between FY20 and FY21, the % of total number of children (ages 0 to 17) remained unchanged at 23%. The % of total youth (18-24) also remained the same at 9% of total population. There was a slight 1% decrease in the 35-44 age group. Overall, age group distribution remained relatively the same as in FY20.



Note: Total of 105 persons (1%) missing Date of Birth information.

The percent of adults aged 55+ in shelter is anticipated to continue to grow significantly as the Baby Boomer generation and Generation X age. Studies show that older individuals experiencing homelessness age prematurely, with rates of cognitive decline and decreased mobility equal to persons 20 years older.^{xiii} This suggests that with the increase of older individuals, the homeless assistance community should anticipate an increase in costs associated with health care services when serving this population. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has further increased vulnerability of the 55+ population. Older adults are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19.^{xiv} To address this, the RtH Board voted to change the CEABHRS prioritization. Individuals experiencing homelessness in congregate settings who are 65 or older, or who possess chronic health conditions were eligible for the COVID-19 Prevention Space. In addition, during COVID-19, Rapid Re-housing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) openings are currently being prioritized for people in congregate settings who are at a higher risk of developing COVID-19 symptoms, including those who are 65 and older.

GENDER OF ALL PERSONS SERVED IN FY21



Note: 13 (<1%) persons missing gender information excluded

In the City of Philadelphia, 58% of persons experiencing homelessness were male, 41% were female, and the remaining 1% were transgender or gender non-conforming. A closer review suggests an even wider gender split. Adding the household type shows that for individuals (households with adults only), 69% were male and 30% female. The difference between the percent of male and females widens even further when looking at the number of individuals who were unsheltered during the 2021 Point-in-Time Count, with 72% male (507), 26% female (182) and 2% transgender or gender non-conforming (11). Studies have shown that men are more likely to stay in unsheltered situations and experience longer durations of homelessness than women and transgender individuals.^{xv, xvi, xvii}

Transgender individuals are reported to experience more frequent episodes of homelessness, and on average are significantly younger than other gender cohorts.^{xviii, xix} This is seen in individuals served in Philadelphia during FY21, where the average age for adult females was 39, for adult males 47, and for transgender & gender non-conforming individuals, 35 was the average age.

CONCLUSION

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, OHS and its partners remained opened and moved quickly to implement CDC guidelines for COVID-19 protocols while still providing services such as meals, sanitation stations, and moving people to permanent housing. COVID-19 Prevention sites were opened to house the most susceptible to the virus. Despite the challenges of navigating service delivery with reduced staffing and the pandemic backdrop, our community continued to maintain project-level and system-wide performance monitoring to help make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. OHS will continue to focus on data quality while ensuring all people have equal access to the resources they need to prevent or resolve their homelessness, no matter their age, ancestry, national origin, ethnicity, disability, marital status, domestic violence status, family composition, gender identity, sexual orientation, or source of income.

The CoC succeeded in keeping people safe throughout the pandemic providing emergency housing to over 12,000 people with a COVID infection rate below 2.8%. Unlike many cities, Philadelphia deployed all its CARES (CRF) Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding within less than 6 months using the funds to expand the provider network to reach more youth and communities of color and designed Help for the Hurdles, an employment initiative for those in emergency shelter, with CARES ESG funds, which helps participants with childcare and transportation assistance so that they can obtain meaningful employment as our City moves into recovery post pandemic. As we move forward, OHS will continue to provide additional resources to aid in economic recovery and continue to utilize historically unprecedented assistance from the Federal government to help end homelessness in Philadelphia.

Key Terms

- **Adult:** Persons age 18 and older.
- **After Hours:** An emergency shelter project that provides beds on a night-by-night basis to persons entering emergency shelter after 5:00 pm on weekdays, on weekends or holidays. After Hours beds are also referred to as Overflow beds.
- **Child:** Persons age 17 and younger.
- **Chronically Homeless:** A person experiencing homelessness (in a place not meant for human habitation, safe haven, or an emergency shelter) continuously for at least 1 year, or on at least four separate occasions in last 3 years where the combined length of time is those occasions is at least 12 months; and the person has a disability.
- **Disability:** an individual with a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder or brain injury. The condition must be:
 - Expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration
 - Impedes the individual's ability to live independently; and
 - Could be improved with suitable housing conditions.
- **Emergency Shelter:** Any facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for persons experiencing homelessness.
- **Household:** One or more individuals who live together.
- **Housing Inventory Count:** also known as the HIC, this chart is a complete inventory of all Emergency, Transitional, Safe Haven, Permanent Supportive, and Rapid Re-housing projects within the Philadelphia Continuum of Care.
- **Parenting Youth:** Youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who identifies as the parent or guardian of one or more children who are present or sleeping in the same place as that youth parent.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing:** Long-term housing project that provides supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability to live independently.
- **Point-in-Time Count:** Also known as the PIT, this is an annual count of all persons experiencing homelessness, sheltered or unsheltered, on a given night in January.
- **Rapid Re-Housing:** A project that provides rental assistance and supportive services on a time-limited basis to homeless families and individuals.
- **Transitional Housing:** Used to facilitate the movement of homeless families and individuals into permanent housing, this project type provides supportive services and housing for up to 24 months.
- **Unaccompanied Youth:** Persons under the age of 25 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- **Winter Initiative:** An emergency shelter project that provides supplemental beds on a planned basis during the winter. Winter Initiative beds are also referred to as Seasonal or Code Blue beds.
- **Youth:** Unaccompanied youth are persons under age 25 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as his/her child or children. Unaccompanied youth are single youth, youth couples, and groups of youth presenting together as a household.

Sources

- ⁱ This report does not provide overall testing and positivity rates for the entire OHS System. The number of positive cases only reflects those that have been reported to OHS by the providers. For citywide testing rates and results, please refer to <https://www.phila.gov/programs/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/testing-and-data/#/>
- ⁱⁱ The PEW Charitable Trusts (2020). How COVID-19 Has Undercut Philadelphians' Physical and Financial Well-Being. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2020/10/how-covid-19-has-undercut-philadelphians-physical-and-financial-well-being>
- ⁱⁱⁱ The PEW Charitable Trusts (2020). How COVID-19 Has Undercut Philadelphians' Physical and Financial Well-Being.
- ^{iv} U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2021). Conducting the 2021 Unsheltered PIT Count. <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Conducting-the-2021-Unsheltered-PIT-Count.pdf>
- ^v U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2014). Point-in-Time Count Methodology Guide. 18.
- ^{vi} Rhee T.G., Rosenheck R.A. (2021) Why are black adults over-represented among individuals who have experienced lifetime homelessness? Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition analysis of homelessness among US male adults. Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health 2021, Vol 75, 161-170
- ^{vii} U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2020). The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. 12.
- ^{viii} U.S. Census Bureau (2019 population estimated); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
- ^{ix} U.S. Census Bureau (2019 population estimated); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
- ^x U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2020). The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. 12.
- ^{xi} U.S. Census Bureau (2019 population estimated); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

^{xiii} Culhane, D., Byrne, T., Metraux, S., Kuhn, R., Doren, K., Johns, E. and Schretzman, D. (2019). The Emerging Crisis of Aged Homelessness. <https://1slo241vnt3j2dn45s1y90db-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Emerging-Crisis-of-Aged-Homelessness-1.pdf>

^{xiv} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD) (2021). COVID- 19, Different Groups of People. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>

^{xv} Batko, S., Oneto, A. D., Shroyer, A. (2020). Unsheltered Homelessness: Trends, Characteristics, and Homeless Histories. Urban Institute, Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center, <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103301/unsheltered-homelessness.pdf>.

^{xvi} Montgomery, A.E., Szymkowiak, D., Marcus, J., Howard P., and Culhane, D.P. (2016). Homeless, Unsheltered Status, and Risk Factors for Mortality: Findings from the 100,000 Homes Campaign. Public Health Reports Vol. XX: 1-8, 3-9.

^{xvii} Bird, M., Rhoades, H., Lahey, J., Cederbaum, J. and Wenzel, S. (2017). Life Goals and Gender Differences Among Chronically Homeless Individuals Entering Permanent Supportive Housing. Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless. Vol. 26, No. 1, 9-15.

^{xix} Wilson, B., Choi, S. K., Harper, G., Lightfoot, M., Russell, S., Meyer, I. (2020). Homelessness Among LGBT Adults. UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, 3-6.