

# State of Youth Homelessness in San Diego County

## October 2021 - Part 1

This document provides a snapshot of the state of youth homelessness in San Diego in 2020 and highlights existing disparities. The goal of this report is to give light to the lack of comprehensive data and to identify and share proposed solutions.

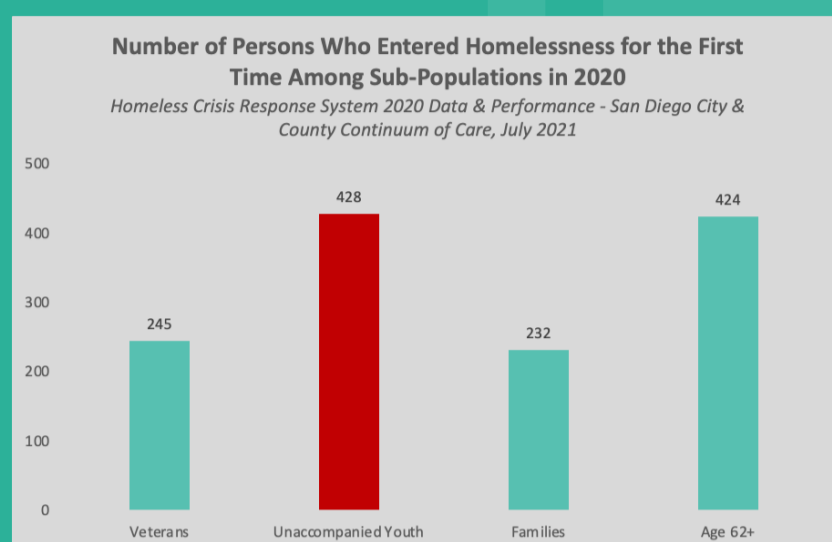
According to the California Coalition for Youth (CCY), **determining the number of youth experiencing homelessness is extremely challenging** and estimates vary depending upon the definition and methodology used. Youth are very mobile and frequently make an effort to avoid detection and contact with adults and social service systems, resulting in them not being counted during annual homeless surveys. A major challenge in San Diego is the **lack of comprehensive data** on the size and characteristics of youth who are experiencing homelessness. The lack of comprehensive data has made it difficult for stakeholders to develop a comprehensive, county-wide strategy to address youth homelessness. The SDYHC believes the emerging Built For Zero work will eventually improve the data; however, this project is in its early stages for the youth population.

The Regional Task Force on Homelessness reported that in 2020, **youth made up the largest number of San Diegans entering homelessness for the first time**. Further, according to the April 2021 Continuum of Care Report, 2,201 unaccompanied youth ages 18-24 were served by the Homelessness Crisis Response System in 2020, compared to 513 youth counted in the 2020 Youth Point-In-Time Count. Taken together, this annual snapshot in addition to the annual service count demonstrates a substantial unmet need in the community. These counts add to an overall understanding but do not represent the entirety of youth homelessness in San Diego County.

Based on a recent report from CCY regarding the impact that COVID-19 has had on youth who are experiencing homelessness, and youth service providers across San Diego seeing a rise in the number of youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability, the SDYHC believes

that **youth homelessness is on the rise**.

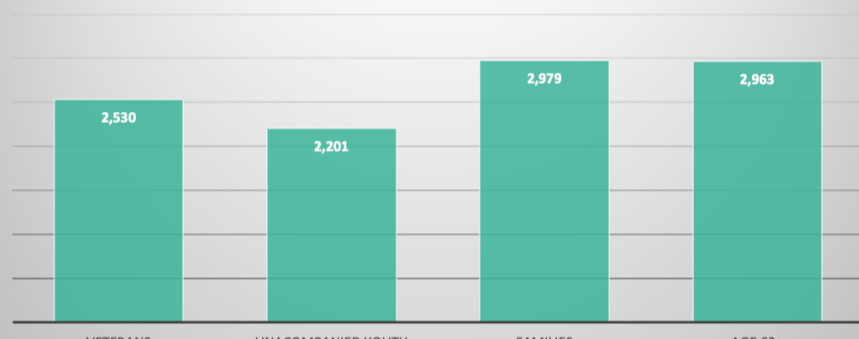
Our goal is to obtain comprehensive data to empower the community to work together to end youth homelessness.



According to a January 2021 report by the California Coalition for Youth, 312 youth responded to a survey, **9% were from San Diego**. Responses demonstrated that the inequities and disproportionality seen throughout COVID-19 are consistent with the inequity and disproportionality seen in youth homelessness. BIPOC and LGBTQ youth are over represented and the most impacted by housing instability, homelessness, and COVID-19.

### Total Persons Served in 2020 within Sub-Populations in Non-Permanent Housing Projects

*Homeless Crisis Response System 2020 Data & Performance - San Diego City & County Continuum of Care, July 2021*



**32%** of youth had 3 or more different sleeping locations in the last week because they could not stay in their home or did not have a home.

*COVID Has Severely Impacted My Life - Needs and Experiences of Youth Experiencing Homelessness in CA During COVID-19, January 2021*

## Prevalence of Youth Homelessness in America

**1 in 10**  
(3.5 million)

young adults ages 18-25 experienced some form of homelessness over a 12-month period. About **50%** of them involved explicitly reported homelessness while the other half involved couch surfing only.



**1 in 30**  
(700,000)

youth ages 13-17 experienced some form of homelessness over a 12-month period. About **75%** of them involved explicitly reported homelessness (including running away or being kicked out) and **24%** involved couch surfing only.



**20,631**

children with their families and unaccompanied youth in San Diego County who met the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act definition of homelessness were enrolled in public schools. **523** of those were unaccompanied youth.



According to the 2017 Voices of Youth Count Missed Opportunities report, the longer youth experience homelessness, the harder it is to escape homelessness. To permanently exit homelessness, youth need housing **AND** support services that are specifically designed to meet their unique developmental needs. Adolescence and young adulthood are critical developmental stages in a person's life and support services must consider this to be effective. Every day of housing instability and homelessness represents missed opportunities to support the healthy development and well-being of our San Diego youth.

*Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.*

## What's Next?

The San Diego Youth Homelessness Consortium has committed to the aggressive plan below to educate the community on the state of youth homelessness in San Diego County and collect comprehensive data that reflects the scale of youth homelessness in the region.

**2021**

**October:** Pilot a youth count with 9 organizations and CIE/HMIS data for youth experiencing homelessness who were served in 2020 to better understand prevalence in San Diego County.  
**November:** Distribute Part 1 of the State of Youth Homelessness in San Diego County.  
**December:** Complete data analysis of the pilot project and expand count to additional youth-serving agencies. Document methodology to create an annual youth count for San Diego County.  
**January:** SDYHC leads the 2021 Youth Point-In-Time Count in collaboration with the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness.

**2022**

**January:** Host focus groups with affected youth.  
**January:** Revisit the Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness and recommend revisions/updates.  
**Early 2022:** Distribute Part 2 of the State of Youth Homelessness in San Diego County that includes a summary report of focus groups and data from the youth count pilot project.  
**Spring:** Host another community forum.

### San Diego Youth Homelessness Consortium (SDYHC)

[www.sdyhc.org](http://www.sdyhc.org)

The mission of the SDYHC is a group of providers, young people, and stakeholders who are committed to preventing and ending youth homelessness in San Diego County by creating a multi-disciplinary, community-wide system, in alignment with San Diego's Coordinated Community Plan (CCP), to serve youth ages 24 and under. Our vision is that youth homelessness will decrease in San Diego County, and any housing instability faced by young people will be brief and non-recurring through our collective service efforts.

The values of the SDYHC include integrity, respect, innovation, inclusion, equity, and collaboration.

- Integrity: We demonstrate honesty, transparency, and fairness in everything we do as a Consortium.
- Respect: We treat each other with mutual consideration and sensitivity, recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion.
- Innovation: We seek new approaches, capitalize on opportunities, and amplify the impact of initiatives.
- Inclusion and Access: We commit that all systems will be inclusive, in that all programs and services will be accessible and responsive to youth, parents, and caregivers with varying abilities and cultural, race, color, language, socio-economic, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and religious backgrounds.
- Equity: We intentionally seek to reduce barriers to all youth in our region to receive fair treatment, access to services, and opportunity.
- Collaboration: We work together through our Values to accomplish our Mission, Vision, and Purpose.