



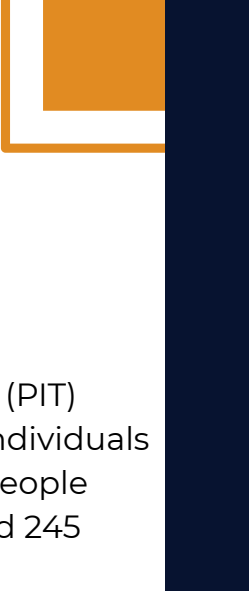
Knoxville-Knox County 2025

Annual Point in Time Count Report



*An Annual Census on Homelessness to
Inform Community Action & Planning*

www.knoxtnhousing.org



Executive Summary

On January 22, 2025, Knoxville-Knox County conducted its annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, a federally mandated census with the goal of capturing the number of individuals experiencing homelessness on a single night. This year's count identified 1,174 people without stable housing: 814 in emergency shelter, 115 in transitional housing, and 245 without shelter.

It's important to note that the PIT count always underestimates the number of people living without shelter, sometimes by a large amount, because the volunteers conducting the census simply cannot find every person living outdoors.

The PIT Count also measures shelter capacity. Even with the temporary addition of over 400 warming center beds due to extreme cold, there were still more individuals needing shelter than available beds. This gap underscores a key reality: homelessness in our community is not primarily a matter of personal choice, but of available and appropriate housing options.

Key Findings:

- Most unsheltered individuals are local residents, with the majority having lived in Knox County for years before losing housing.
- The number of people without shelter exceeded available beds, even during maximum capacity on PIT night.
- Rising housing costs and stagnant incomes continue to put more households at risk; median rent has increased 62% since 2020, while average wages have risen only 15%.
- Warming centers drew many indoors who would otherwise have been unsheltered, demonstrating the importance of expanding safe and appropriate shelter options.
- Youth and young adults (ages 18–24) face unique risks, with high rates of first-time homelessness and mental health challenges.

This report provides context, data, and analysis to help guide decision-making for policymakers, service providers, neighbors and community leaders. By understanding the scope and nature of homelessness in Knoxville-Knox County, local agencies and decision-makers can target resources more effectively and work toward reducing the number of people without a safe place to live.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Table of Contents	3
Background on Homelessness in Knoxville-Knox County	4
2025 Count Overview	5
Point in Time Count Background	6
• What is the PIT Count?	
• Who is included?	
• Community Context in 2025	
Methodology	8
Findings	10
• 2025 East TN Rates of Homelessness	
• Knox County Population 2007-2025	
• Knoxville-Knox County Housing Statistics	
• Knox County PIT Count historical data	
Unsheltered Data	15
Sheltered Data	24
• Warming Centers	
• Families in Shelter	
• Household Information in Emergency Shelter	
• Single Households in Shelter	
Transitional Housing Data	34
Youth and Young Adult Data & Knox County Schools	37
Housing Inventory Count	45
Sharing Gratitude	47
Definitions	48
Citations	49

How many people are homeless in Knoxville & Knox County ?



Counting individuals without fixed addresses presents inherent challenges that can affect accuracy. Different definitions of homelessness also make comparison difficult. For this report, we rely on two primary local data sources:

1. Point-in-Time (PIT) Count – An annual snapshot in January that measures people experiencing literal homelessness (meaning they are in shelter or have no safe place to sleep, such as a car, park, or sidewalk) on a single night.
2. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – A year-round secure database used by participating service providers to track people accessing shelter, housing programs, and other homeless services.

Scope & Limitations:

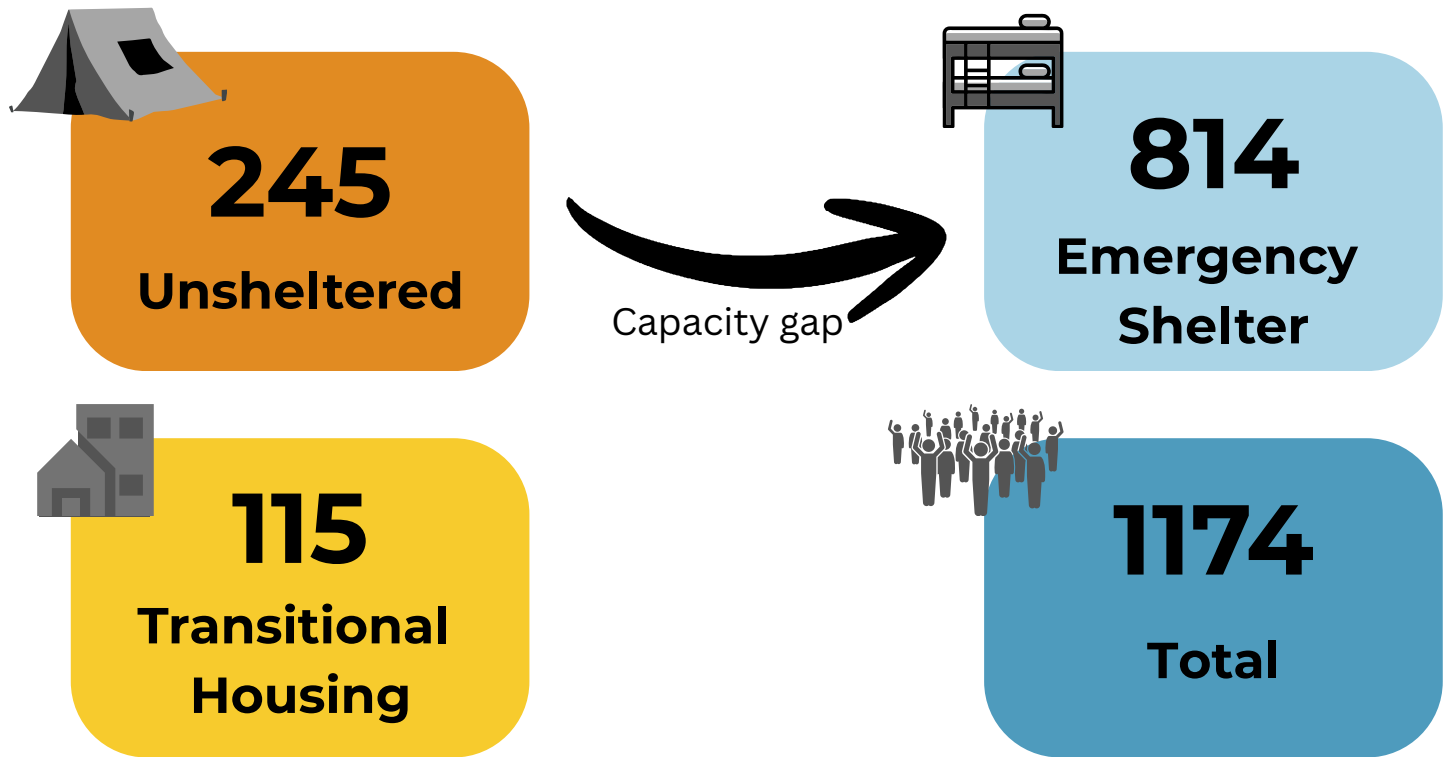
- HMIS includes more people overall, including those who might only access homeless services temporarily, while PIT captures only those literally homeless on a single night.
- Not all providers participate in HMIS, meaning some individuals are not recorded in that system.
- These differences mean the PIT and HMIS numbers will never match exactly — and that's by design. Each source captures a different part of the picture: PIT provides a one-night snapshot for national comparison, while HMIS offers a year-round view of people engaged with services. Together, they show both the ongoing scale of homelessness and the consistent gap between available shelter and need.

2025 Data Comparison:

- HMIS (Q1 2025): 2,165 people per day, on average, stayed in shelter, transitional housing, or on the street
- PIT Count (Jan 22, 2025): 1,174 people experiencing literal homelessness on a single night — 245 still unsheltered despite shelters and warming centers operating at maximum capacity that night.

This difference underscores that homelessness is not simply a matter of personal choice; it reflects a structural capacity gap between available shelter and the number of people who need it.

2025 Overview



Date & Context

The 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count took place on **January 22, 2025** - a night when warming shelters were open due to extreme cold.

Winter Shelter Operations

In Winter 2024-2025, Knox County opened warming centers on 32 nights when temperatures fell below 25 degrees, compared to 8 nights the previous winter. On PIT night, over **400 additional temporary beds** were available through these shelters.

THE SURVEY

A steering committee developed the survey to meet federal requirements and include questions valued by the local community. The survey remains largely consistent year to year, allowing trend comparison, while adapting to capture emerging priorities.

SHELTER CAPACITY GAP

Even with over 400 temporary beds added on PIT night, shelter capacity did not meet the need. Hundreds still had no safe place to stay. This shows that when beds are available, many individuals come indoors - yet a structural gap remains, leaving hundreds without shelter.

Point in Time Count Background

What is the Point in Time Count?

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is a federally guided, annual census of people experiencing literal homelessness — meaning they are staying in shelter, transitional housing, or in a place not meant for human habitation (such as a vehicle, park, or sidewalk). Conducted during the last 10 days of January, the PIT Count provides a consistent snapshot for comparison across communities and over time.

Each Continuum of Care (CoC) region is responsible for carrying out its count. Knoxville-Knox County (CoC TN-502) is one of ten CoCs in Tennessee, and is smaller in population than most other CoC's in Tennessee.

Knoxville and Knox County's mixed urban and rural environment, which includes dense downtown areas, greenbelts, and less-developed regions, makes reaching every unsheltered individual challenging. This is why the PIT Count relies on coordinated planning, trained volunteers, and partnerships with local agencies to maximize coverage.

Nationally, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) compiles PIT data from all CoCs into the Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR), which helps guide federal policy and funding.

While the PIT Count is not a complete measure of homelessness, it remains one of the most consistent, comparable data sources available. It offers insight into who is experiencing homelessness, how many are without shelter, and whether local capacity is meeting need.



Who is included in the PIT count?

The PIT Count includes individuals who are **literally homeless**, meaning they are:

- **Unsheltered** – staying in places not meant for regular sleeping, such as streets, vehicles, parks, or encampments.
- In **Emergency Shelter** – including warming centers open during extreme weather.
- In **Transitional Housing** – short-term housing programs designed to help people move to permanent housing.

These categories follow federal definitions from HUD and provide a standardized snapshot of homelessness on a single night.

The PIT Count does not include some groups who still face serious housing instability, such as:

- People “doubled-up” or couch-surfing with friends/family.
- People in institutions (e.g., hospitals, jails) for more than 90 days without a stable housing plan.

Although not counted under federal definitions of homelessness, individuals in these situations can quickly become homeless when no shelter or housing options are available.

Warming Centers in January 2025



During the winter months, faith communities across Knoxville and Knox County operate a network of emergency warming centers to provide refuge during extreme cold. The current community standard is to open warming centers when nighttime temperatures fall below 25°F. In Winter 2024–25, this threshold was met on 32 nights, compared to eight nights the previous winter — a sharp increase that required significant coordination and volunteer support.

The 2025 PIT Count occurred on one of these nights, which directly affected the results. Many individuals who might have otherwise been unsheltered were able to come indoors. As a result:

- Sheltered numbers increased compared to typical winter nights.
- Unsheltered numbers decreased — but 245 people still had no shelter despite more than 400 additional temporary beds being available.

This context is essential for interpreting PIT results: extreme weather and added capacity can temporarily change where people stay, but the gap between need and available shelter remains.

Methodology

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count follows guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to ensure accuracy, consistency, and to reduce duplicate counts. HUD recommends conducting the count during the last 10 days of January, when individuals without stable housing are more likely to be visible and to have exhausted short-term resources.

Knoxville-Knox County has historically paired a head count with a direct survey. In 2025, the approach shifted to focus solely on surveys, allowing for a 7-day period to collect responses across the community and during service events.

Surveys were conducted by trained outreach teams, volunteers, and partner agencies using a secure mobile application to capture responses and location data in real time. This method improved accuracy, reduced paperwork, and safeguarded sensitive information. Participants received a \$5 thank-you for their time. Surveys typically took 4–7 minutes to complete.

2025 PIT Count Activities

- **Warming Shelter Surveys** – Conducted the night of the count, with added questions to better understand shelter use (e.g., “Where were you staying before coming to the warming center?”).
- **“Come and Be Counted” Sites** – Pop-up locations at trusted community spots, paired with scheduled events and offering incentives.
- **Encampment Outreach** – Led by experienced nonprofit staff and volunteers in areas known to be frequented by individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Downtown Walking Teams** – Deployed in high-traffic areas to engage directly with individuals.
- **School-Based Surveys** – Coordinated with school district staff who work with students experiencing homelessness under federal law, ensuring youth are included in the count.

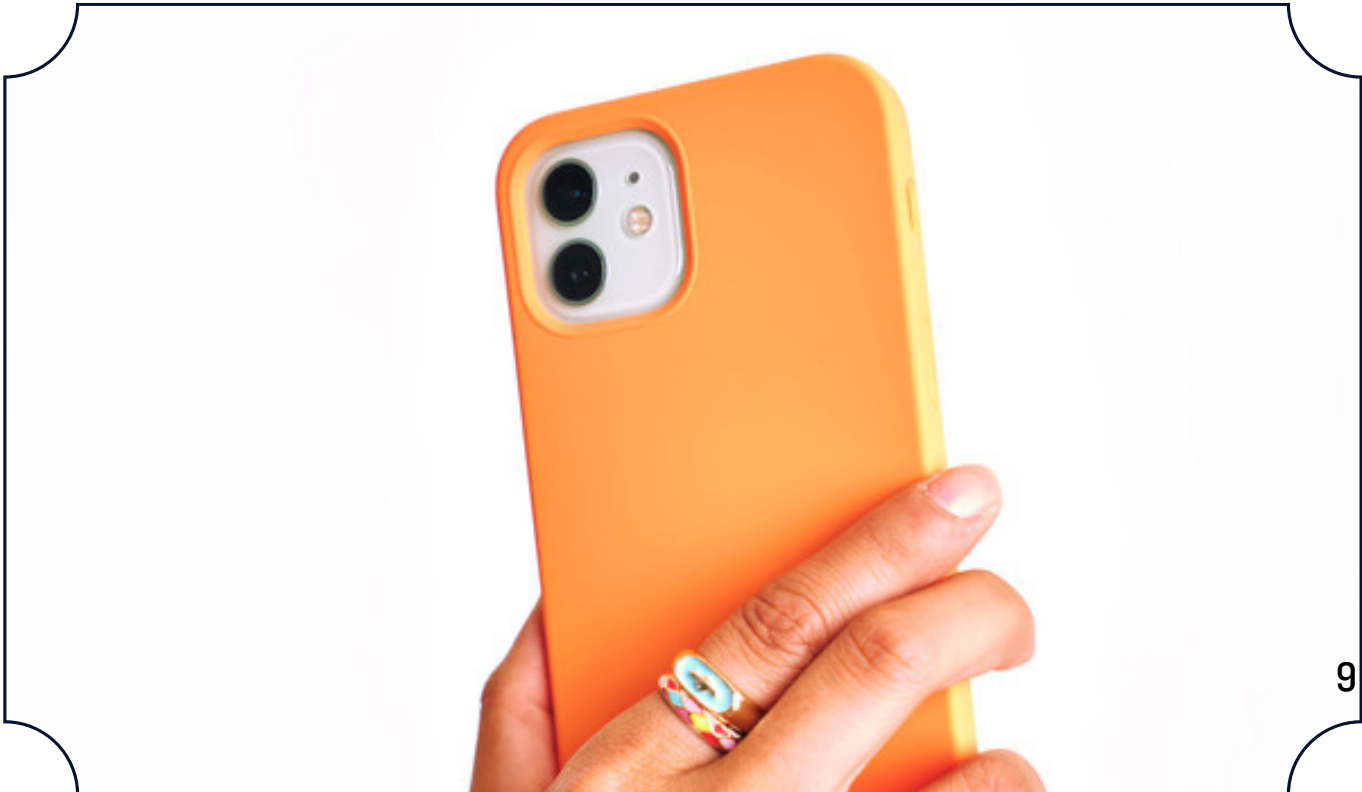
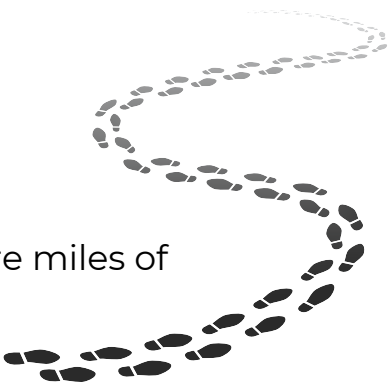
Special attention was given to **transitional-age youth (18–24)**, with slightly modified survey questions to better understand their unique needs.



Planning and Coordination

Planning began in October 2024, led by a steering committee of local agencies, public health officials, and city/county representatives. Outreach areas were strategically assigned to avoid duplication and ensure full coverage. External factors such as weather, policy changes, and law enforcement activity were considered when evaluating results.

Knox County has 508.3 square miles of land, 98 square miles of which is the City of Knoxville.



Findings



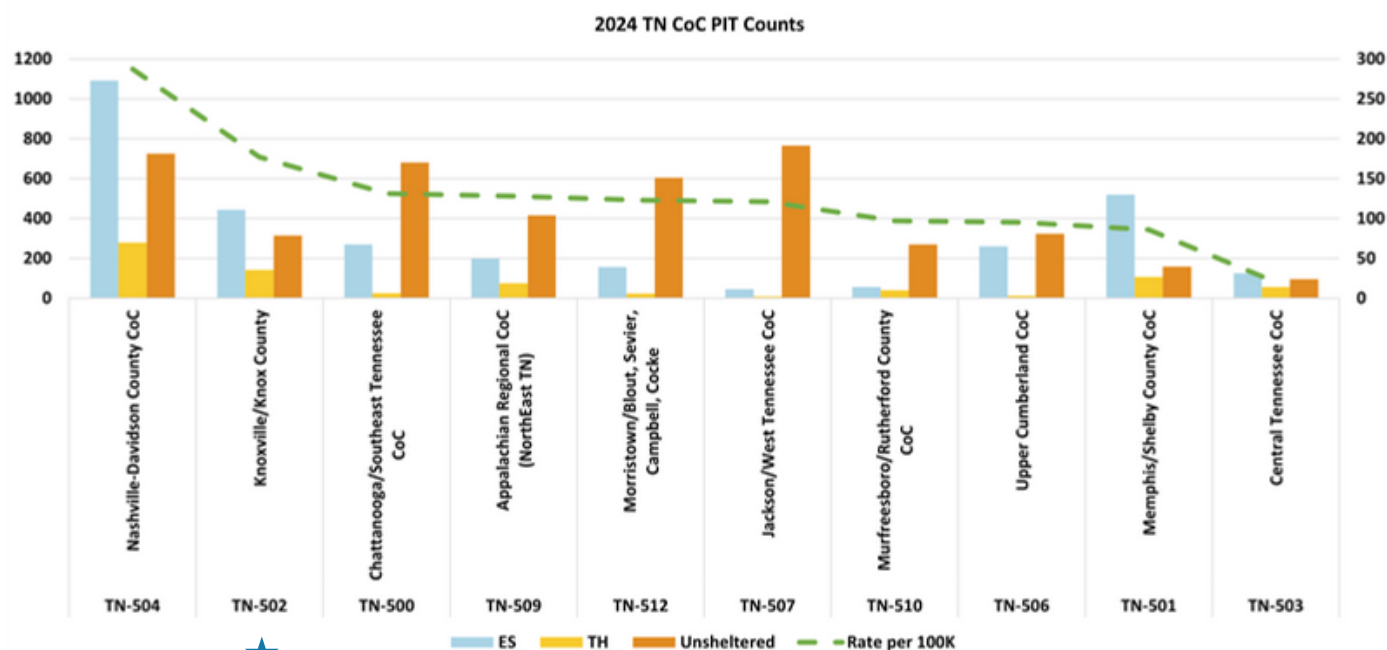
The 2025 PIT Count found 1,174 people experiencing homelessness: 814 in emergency shelter, 115 in transitional housing, and 245 unsheltered.

Even with 400+ extra warming center beds open for extreme cold, demand still exceeded capacity. This shows that most people come indoors when space is available — but hundreds remain unsheltered because there are not enough beds.

2025 East TN County Rates of Homelessness

This chart compares 2024 PIT totals and the rate of homelessness per 100,000 residents across Tennessee's 10 CoCs.

Knox County's rate is not the highest in the state, but unsheltered numbers still exceed available beds.



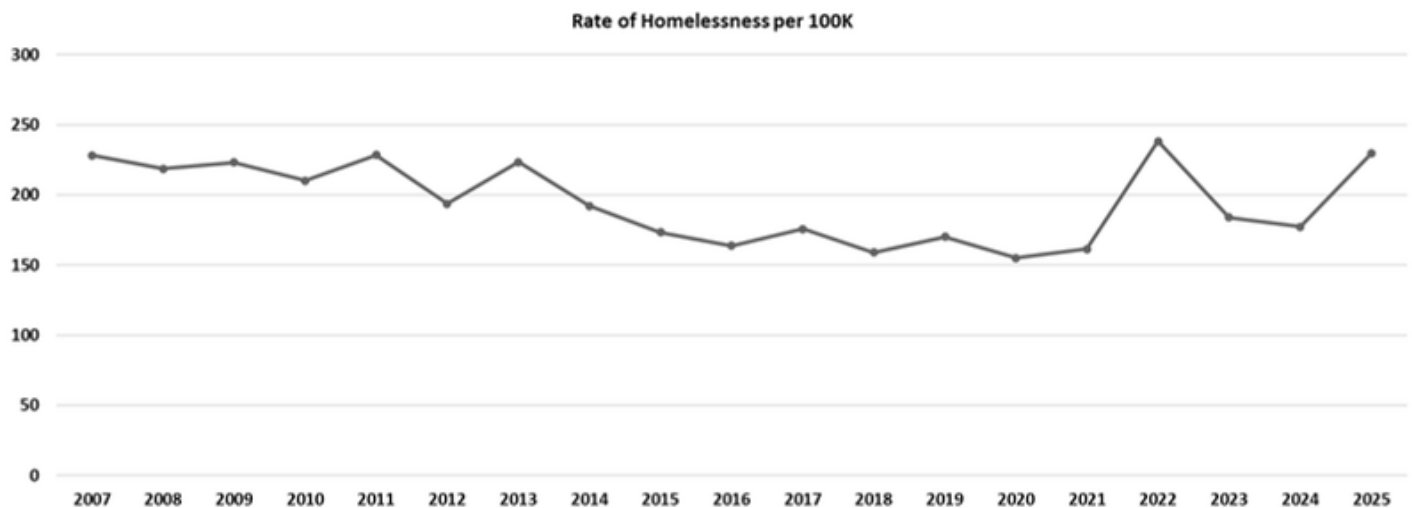
Rate of Homelessness per 100,000 population, 2007-2025

Since 2007, Knox County has grown by **nearly 80,000 residents**, averaging **over 4,700 per year**. Growth has accelerated since 2010, marking the fastest sustained increase in local history. However, even with the population at large growing quickly, homelessness has been rising even more quickly since 2020.

Housing construction has **not kept pace** with this population growth, contributing to higher rents and fewer affordable options. As demand rises and supply lags, more households face housing instability — increasing the risk of homelessness.

For the shelter system, this means **more people competing for the same or fewer beds**, further widening the gap between need and available capacity.

Between 1970 and 2010 (40 years), the City of Knoxville gained less than 5,000 residents total - or about 106 people per year. The level of growth since 2010 has been unprecedented in Knoxville's history, and is forcing changes across the community.



Knoxville-Knox County Housing Statistics

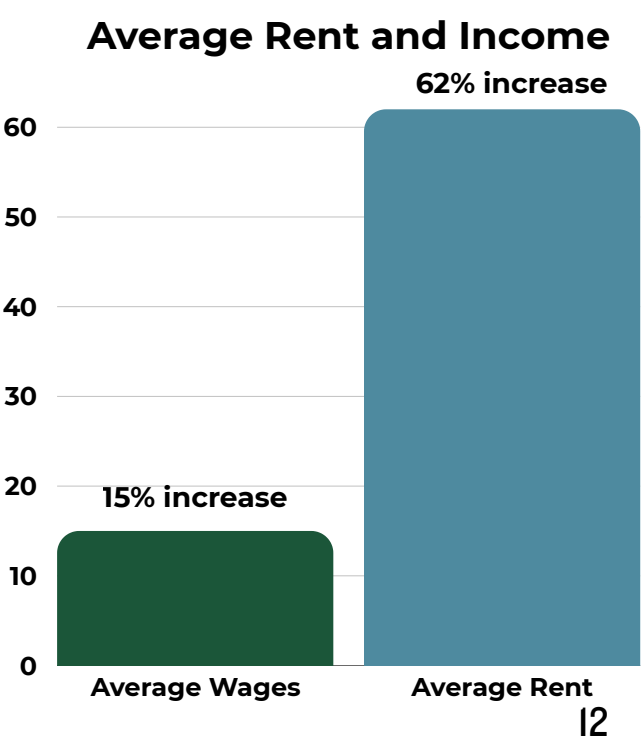
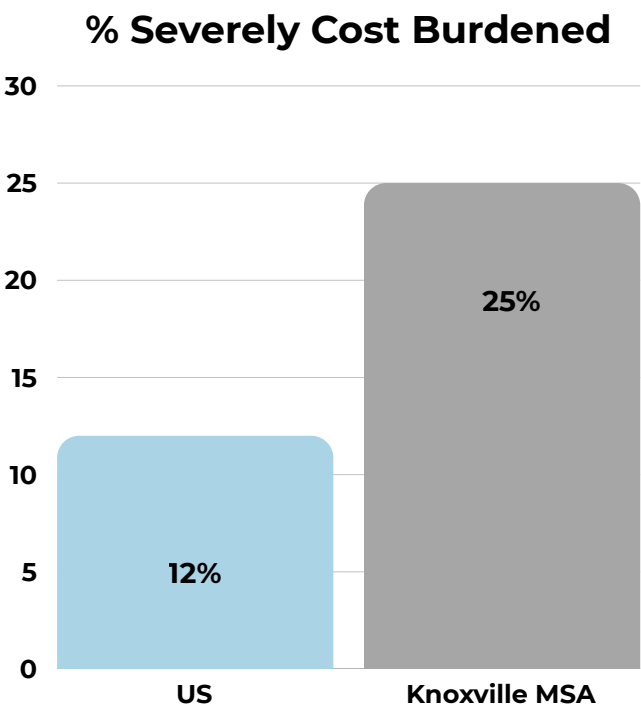
Rising Housing Costs

Between 2020 and 2024, average wages in the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) increased by 15%, while median rent rose over 62%. The Knoxville MSA includes Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Grainger, Knox, Loudon, Morgan, Roane, and Union counties. Tennessee is consistently ranked one of the ten poorest states in the country. Knoxville County has a median household income of \$70,265, compared to \$67,631 across the state.

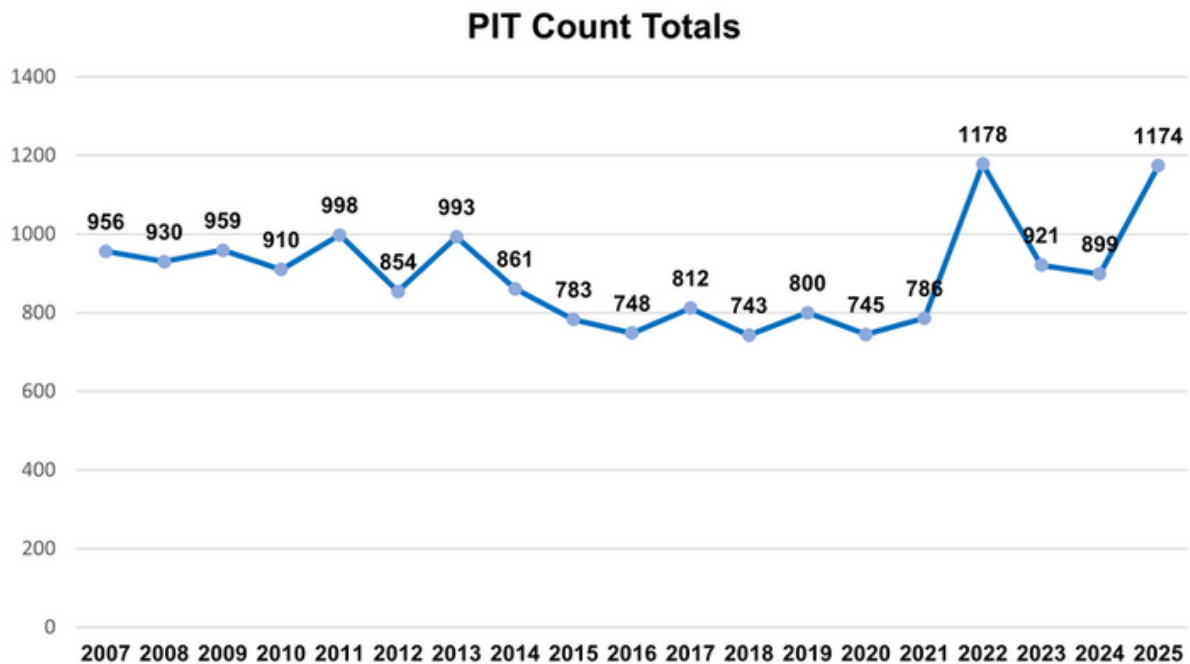
Impact on Housing Stability

Severely cost burdened households, those spending more than 50% of their income on rent each month, are at much greater risk of losing housing when unexpected expenses occur. An eviction can make it significantly harder to find housing again, compounding the cycle of housing instability.

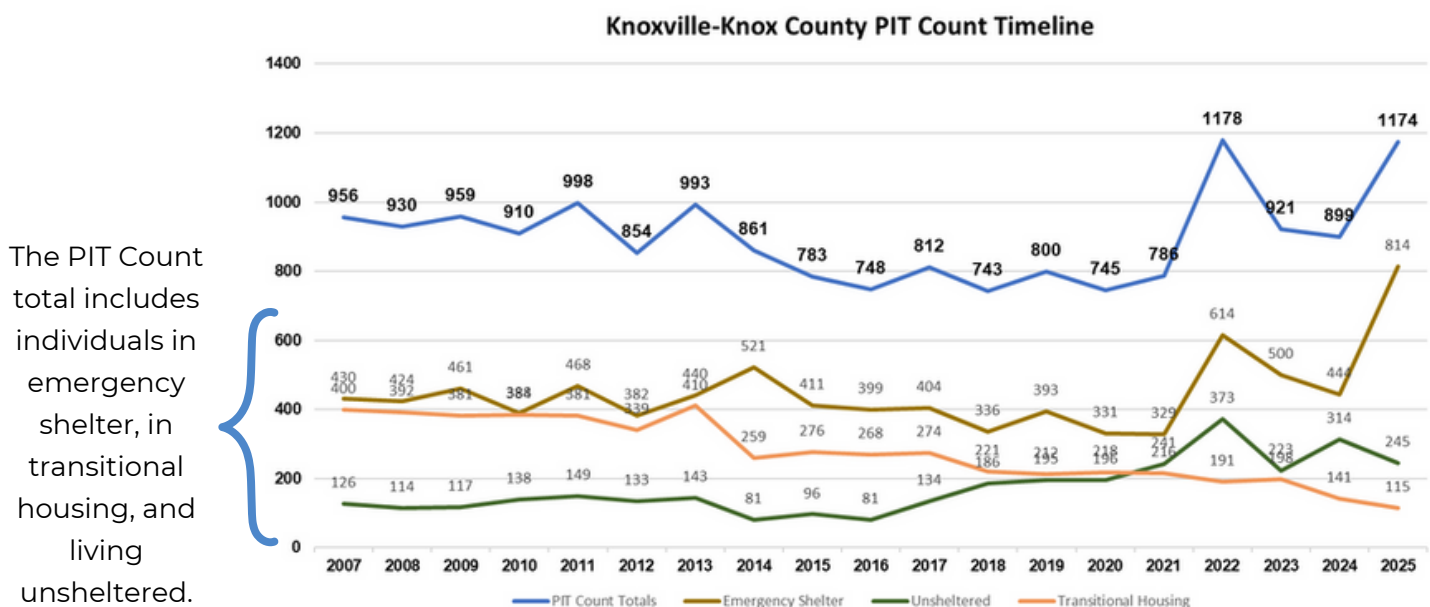
Private developers, non-profits, philanthropists, local government and other partners are working together to increase housing stock in the community at all price points. Even with new development, vulnerable households with fixed or low income face special challenges in finding housing that is attainable. Rising rent and evictions take a heavy toll, with 661 people becoming homeless for the first time in Knoxville-Knox County in the first quarter of 2025 alone.



Knox County PIT Counts over time

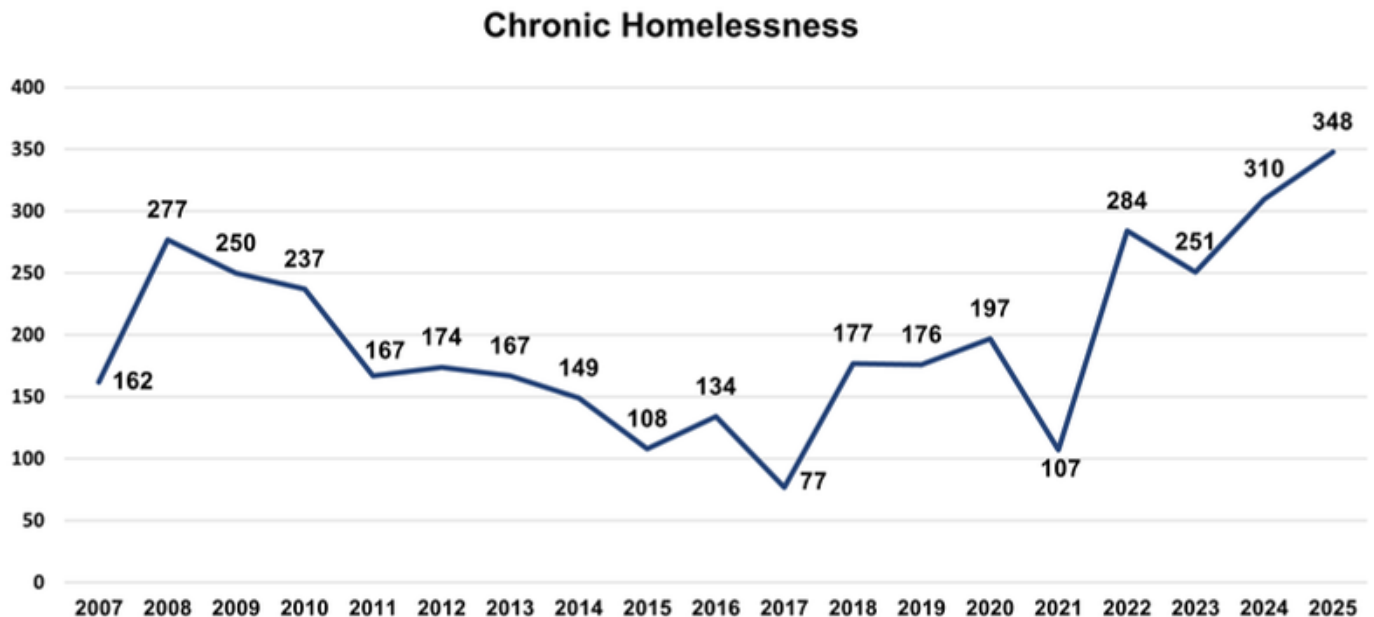


PIT Count totals have been elevated since 2022, driven by large increases in the number of individuals in emergency shelter and sustained growth in unsheltered homelessness.

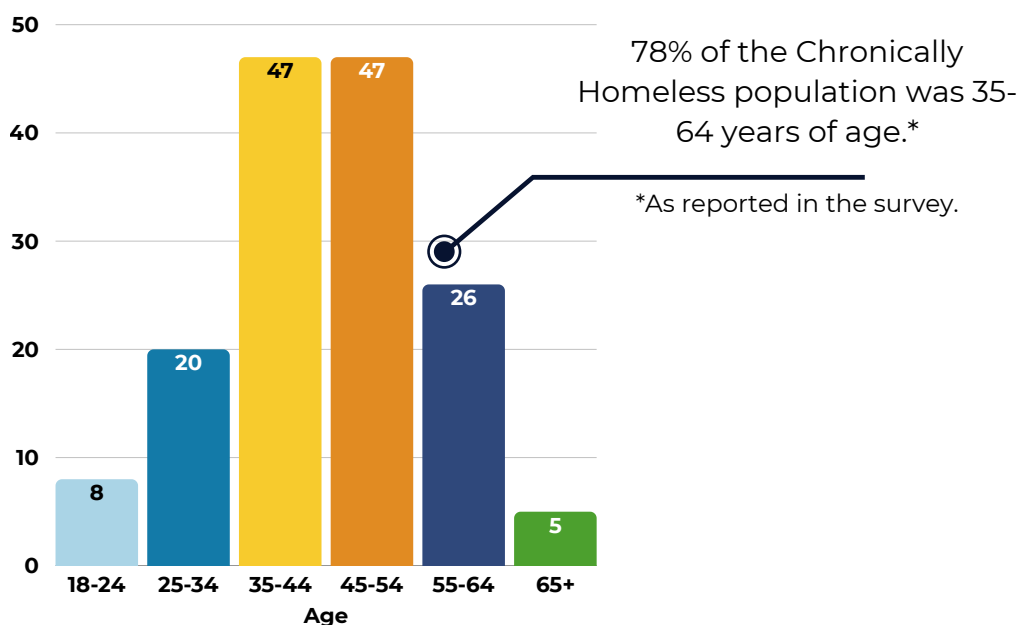


Chronic homelessness in the Knox County PIT Count

Chronic homelessness is defined as an individual experiencing one year or more of homelessness within the last three years, accompanied by a chronic and permanently disabling health condition. Chronic homelessness is now higher than it has ever been.



In the 2025 PIT survey, the largest share of chronically homeless individuals were in the **35-44** and **45-54** age ranges.



Unsheltered Data

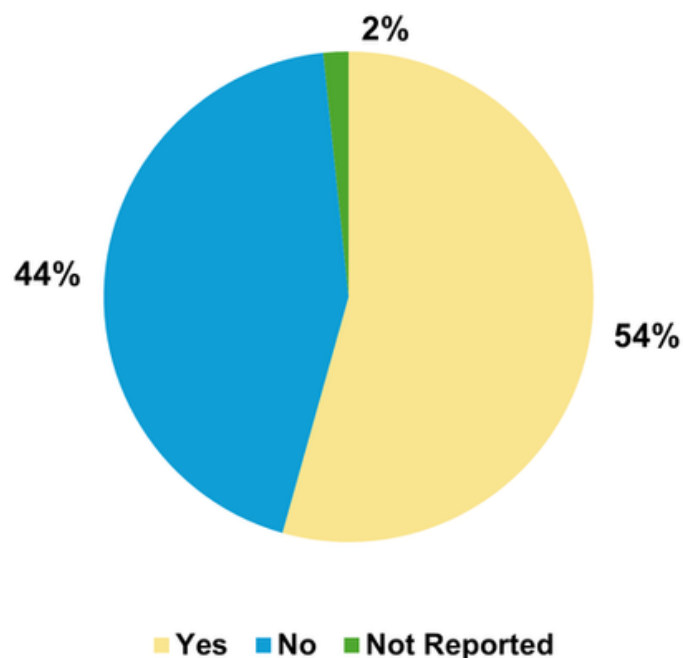


This section focuses on individuals who were not residing in shelter or any form of standard housing on PIT night. Data came primarily from surveys and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

On January 22, **245 individuals** were unsheltered; most slept on streets or sidewalks, or in wooded areas and encampments. **Over 60%** had lived in Knox County before becoming homeless, often for many years.

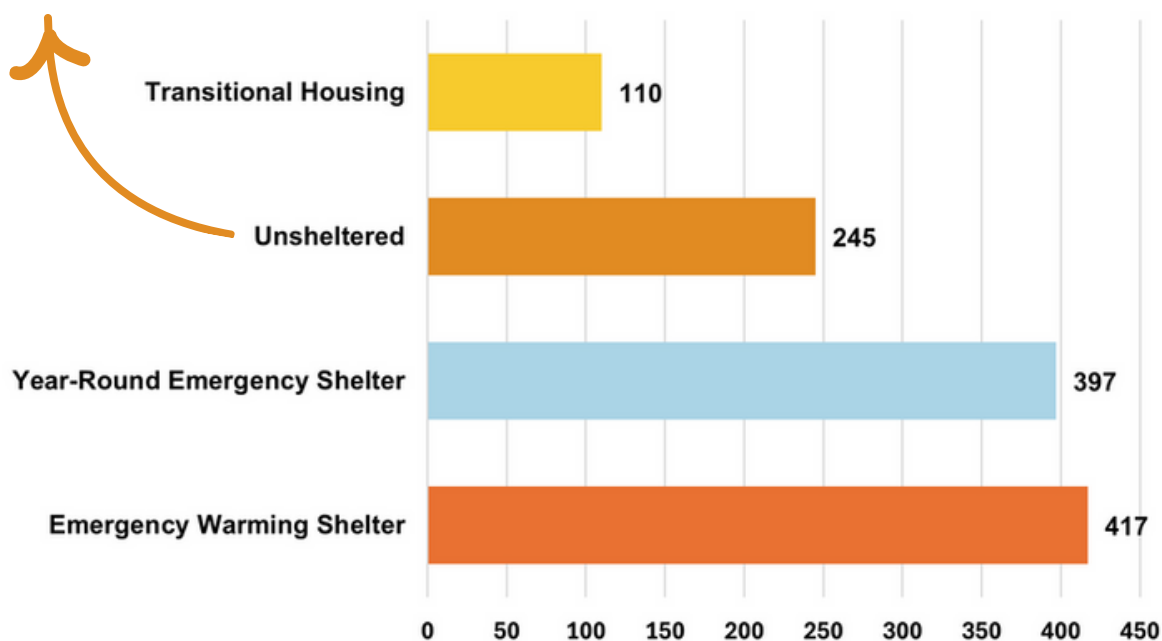
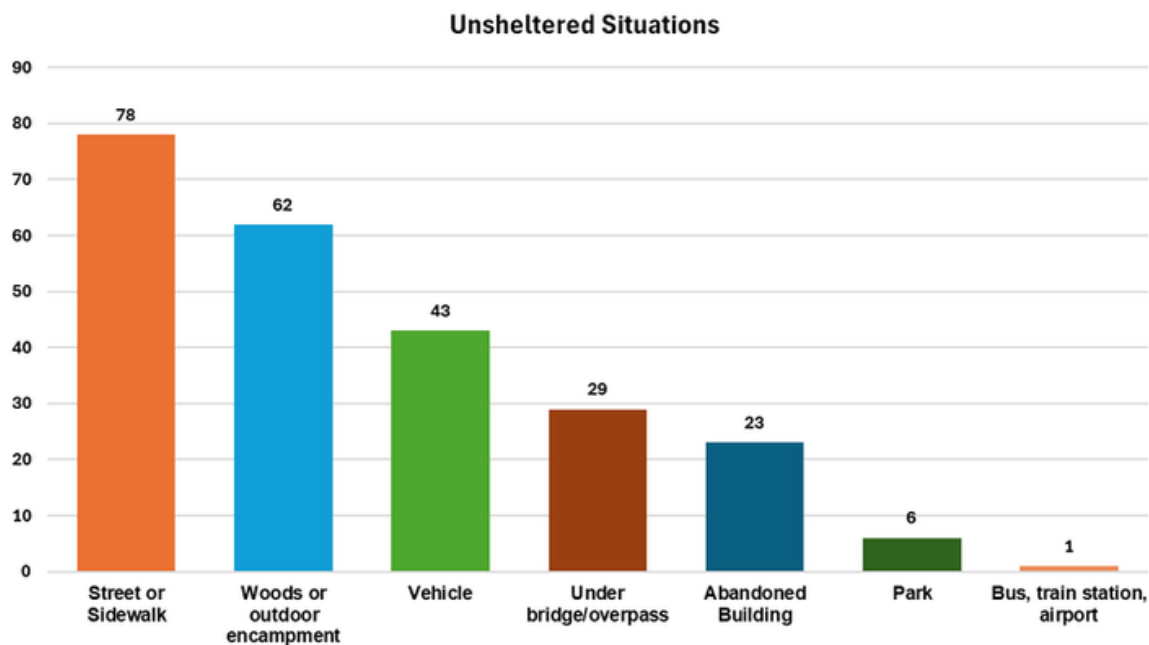
First Time Experiencing Homelessness - unsheltered

Just over **half** reported this as their first episode of homelessness. The longer someone remains unhoused, it can become progressively harder to regain housing due to barriers like documents being stolen, lost or destroyed; lack of identification; eviction; or criminal record.



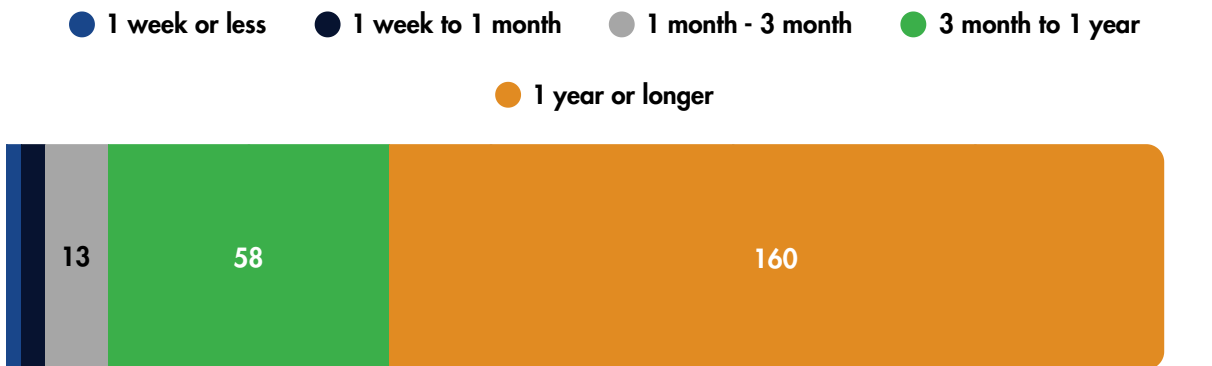
Where People Stayed on PIT night

On the night of the count, over 400 people stayed indoors at emergency warming centers, yet many still slept outside. Most were on streets or sidewalks, often under makeshift coverings, or in wooded areas and outdoor encampments. Others spent the night in vehicles, under bridges, in abandoned buildings, parks, or transit stations.



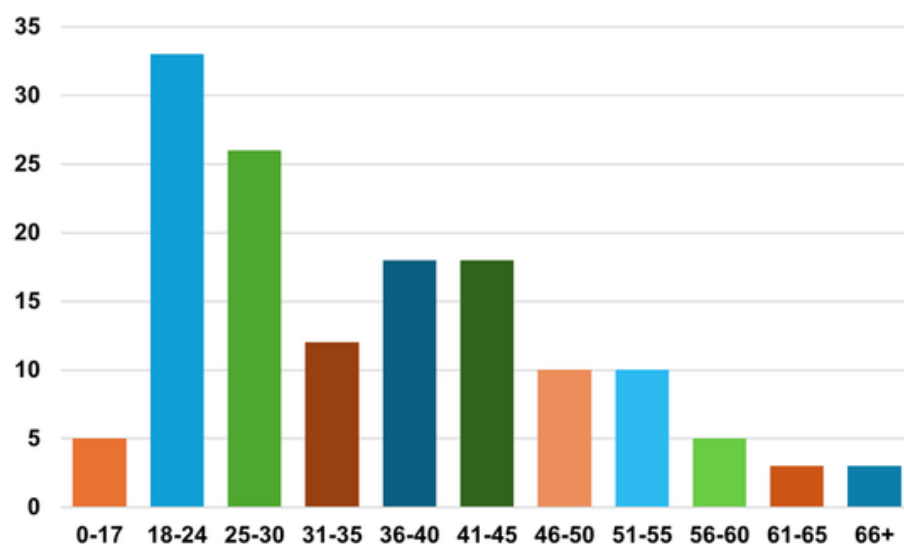
Length of Time Homeless - unsheltered

Longer periods without stable housing make regaining it increasingly difficult. Pre-existing barriers are compounded by homelessness itself, with factors such as theft/loss of personal documents and identification delaying access to services and housing.



Age of 1st experience - unsheltered

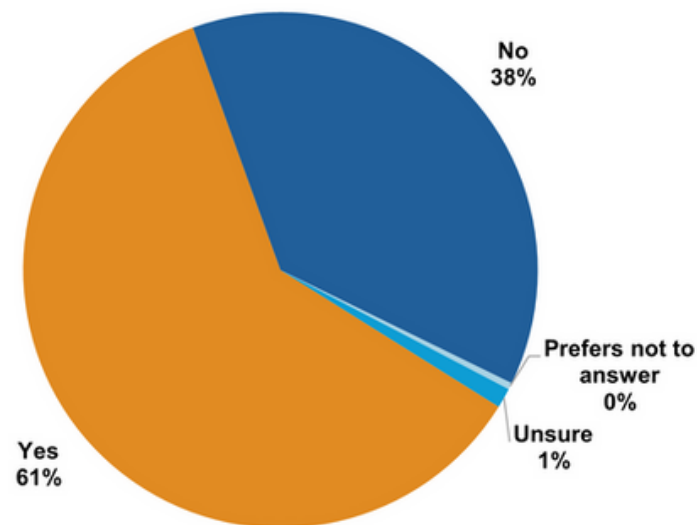
The age at which a person first experiences homelessness can shape long-term outcomes. Early episodes often disrupt education, hinder skill development, and limit future opportunities. Youth exiting foster care face heightened risks, while older adults entering homelessness have fewer resources to recover, particularly if they are unable to work.



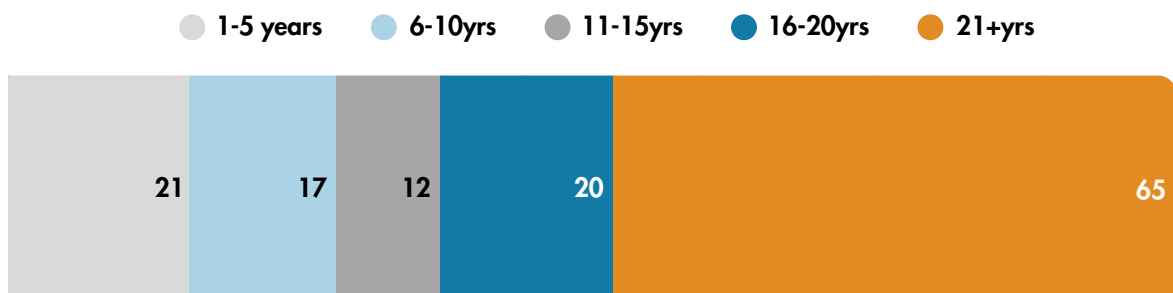
Last Permanent Address - unsheltered

Survey data show that most unsheltered individuals are long-time Knox County residents, not recent arrivals from other areas. Over 60% had housing within Knox County before becoming homeless, often for many years.

Last permanent address in Knox County?



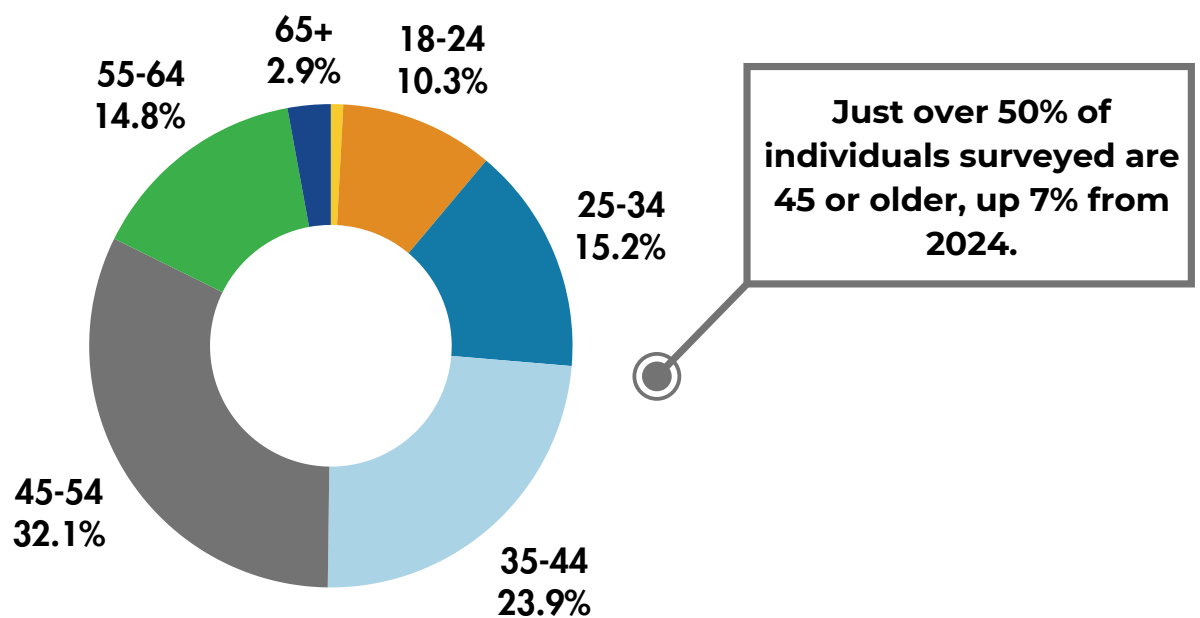
Of those that said yes. This is how long our neighbors lived in Knox County before becoming homeless.



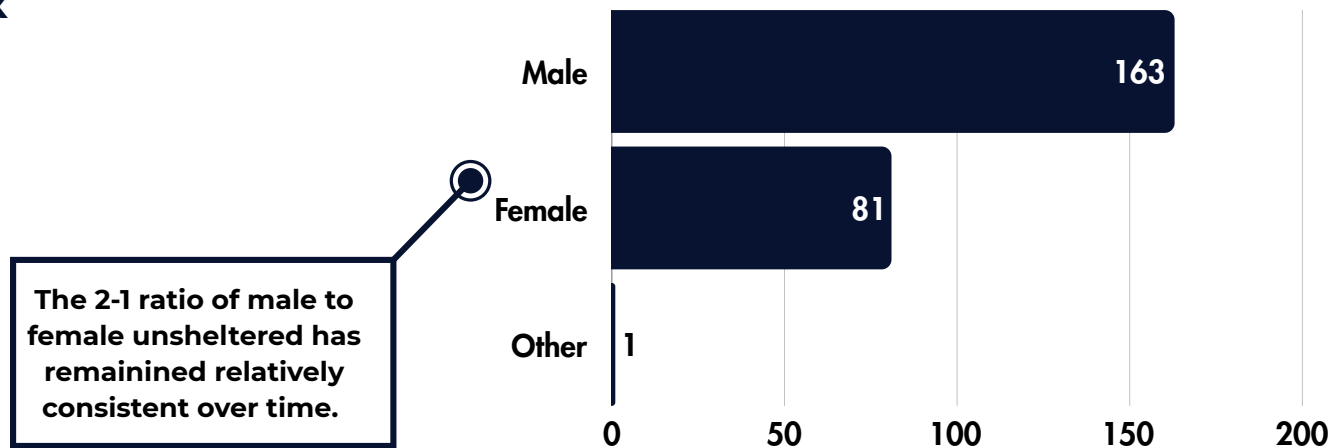
Demographics - unsheltered

Nearly three-quarters of the individuals surveyed in the PIT Count were in their prime working years, between the ages of 25 and 54. There were twice as many men surveyed as women.

Age



Sex

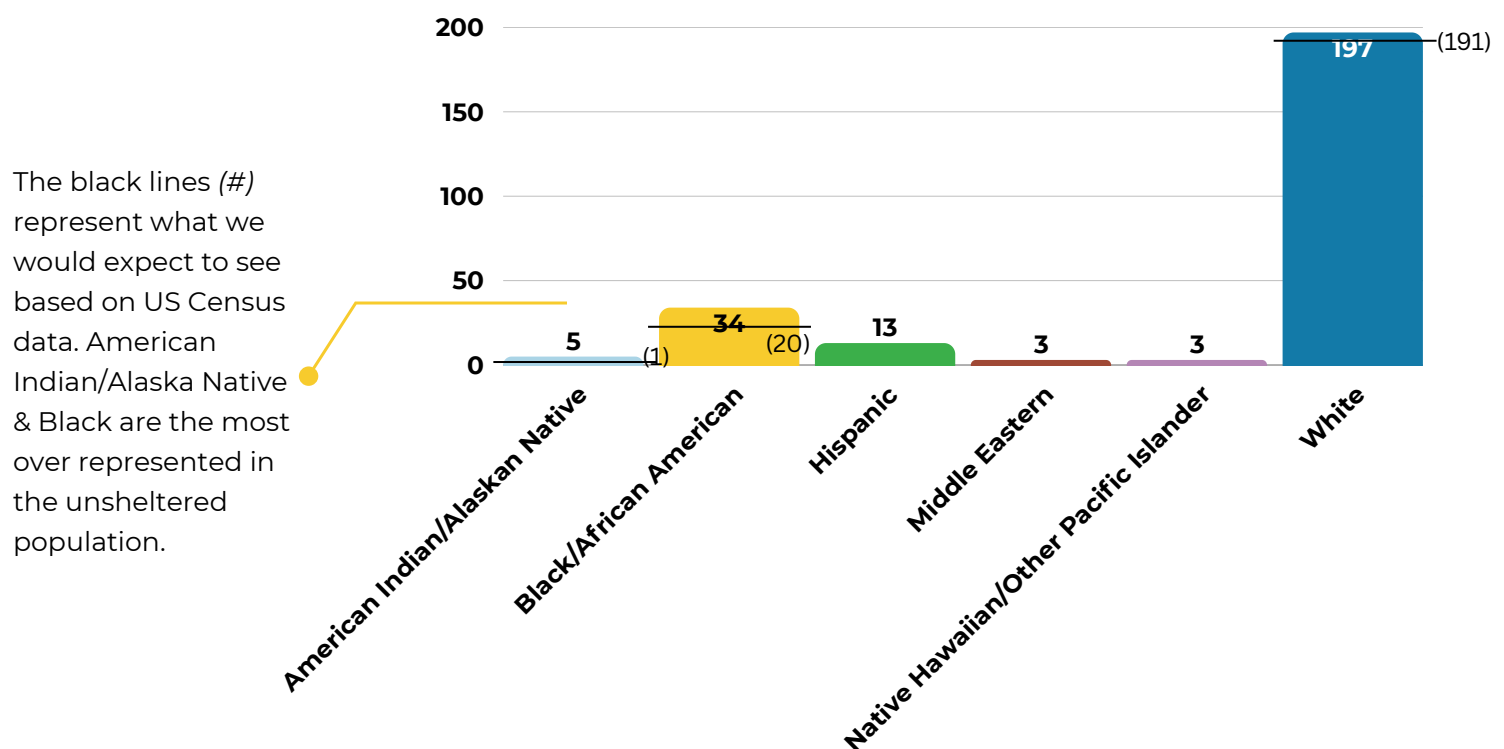


Demographics - unsheltered

Race

Race data, collected through the Homeless Management Information System, allow individuals to identify with multiple categories. American Indian/Alaska Native and Black/African American residents are overrepresented compared to the county population.

Demographic shifts over time can indicate changing risk factors; however, the consistent shortage of shelter beds affects all groups, regardless of age, sex, or race.



Demographic Quick Facts - unsheltered

Survey responses highlight the complex needs of the unsheltered population. Percentages vary by question due to differences in the number of respondents.

28.2% Substance Use

Over one-quarter of those surveyed reported substance use, compared to 19% who report alcohol and drug use in HMIS.

Veterans make up 6% of the Knox County population as a whole, and so are not overrepresented in the unsheltered population.

5.7% Veteran

32.2% Physical Disability

Physical disabilities and chronic health issues can worsen while unsheltered, making recovery more difficult.

People experiencing homelessness are much more likely than the housed population to have a range of health issues, including HIV.

5.3% HIV/AIDS

12.2% Domestic Violence

Accurately accounting for those who have experienced domestic violence can prove challenging, as it often goes unreported.

Mental health conditions can pre-exist or emerge during homelessness; timely and effective treatment can improve stability and support successful transitions into housing.

39.6% Mental Health Concern

Demographics - unsheltered

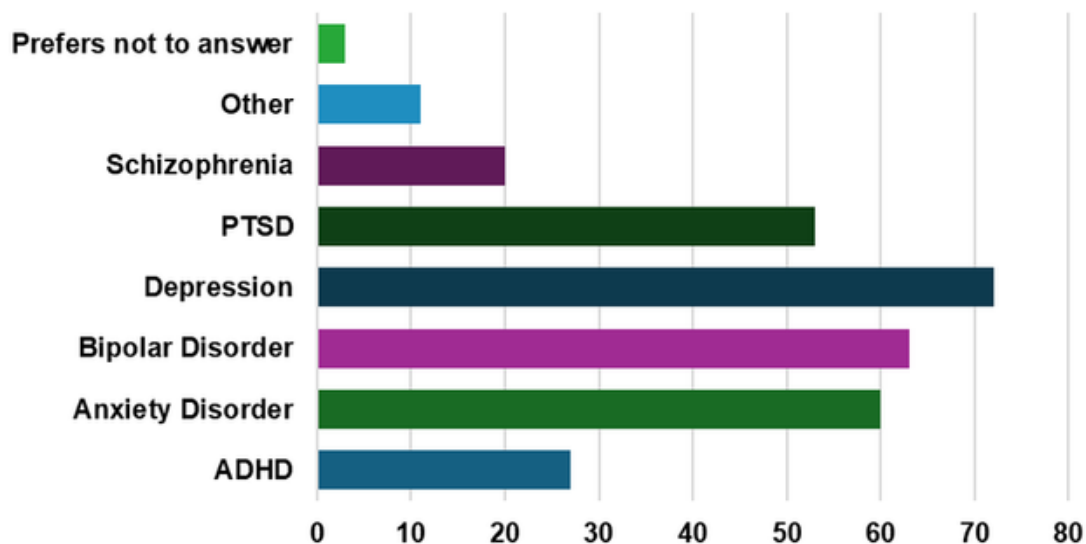
Mental Health Condition refers to a formal diagnosis made by a clinician. Mental Health Concern (see previous page) is broader, self-reported, and does not require clinical evaluation. Depression, anxiety, and PTSD were frequently reported, often alongside bipolar disorder. When untreated, serious mental health conditions can create significant barriers to engaging with services and securing housing.



51.0%

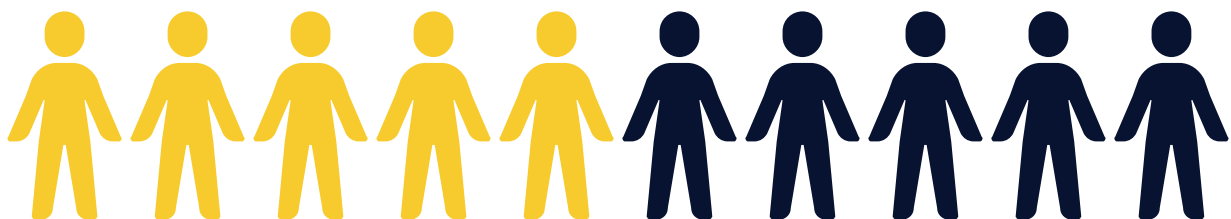
Mental Health
Condition

Prevalence of Mental Health Conditions



Do you drink alcohol or use drugs?

A higher percentage of respondents reported alcohol or drug use (about 50 percent) than identified as having a substance use disorder (28 percent). This gap suggests that use does not always indicate a diagnosed disorder. Local rehabilitation resources are available; however, recovery is more difficult when individuals must navigate treatment while living without shelter.



50%

Demographics - unsheltered

Did you stay alone or with someone last night?

Forty-two percent of unsheltered individuals reported staying alone on the night of the count. This question helps determine how many people are experiencing homelessness as individuals versus within households.



Unsheltered Wrap-Up

The data from unsheltered individuals is influenced by the high number who stayed in warming centers on the night of the Point-in-Time Count. Even so, the findings highlight both the lack of suitable shelter and the realities of living outdoors in Knoxville-Knox County.

Many unsheltered residents have lived locally for years before losing housing. Rising housing costs, stagnant incomes, and a shortage of affordable housing options have increased demand on a shelter system that already operates near capacity.

Living unsheltered often involves repeated victimization and theft, making it difficult to keep phones, identification, or other essential items. Entering housing is rarely immediate; long waitlists and insufficient program openings extend the time people spend without stable shelter.

Sheltered Data

Data for sheltered individuals was gathered through surveys and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Participation varied across warming centers; some provided full survey data, while others reported only demographic information. In past years, surveys were conducted only with those experiencing unsheltered homelessness. For 2025, warming centers were included to capture information about where people stayed prior to coming indoors and to provide a fuller picture of shelter use.

The PIT survey remains a unique community-wide data source, collecting details that are not available elsewhere and reaching populations that are not accessing mainstream homeless services.

Warming Centers

Warming centers open when temperatures drop to 25°F or below. On the night of the count, both HMIS data and surveys were used to capture information. Of the 417 individuals in warming centers, 236 completed surveys; demographic information was available for the remaining 181. Data collection varied by site, but combining survey and HMIS information provided the most complete picture possible. Including warming center participants in the PIT survey offered valuable insight into how many had been unsheltered immediately before coming indoors.



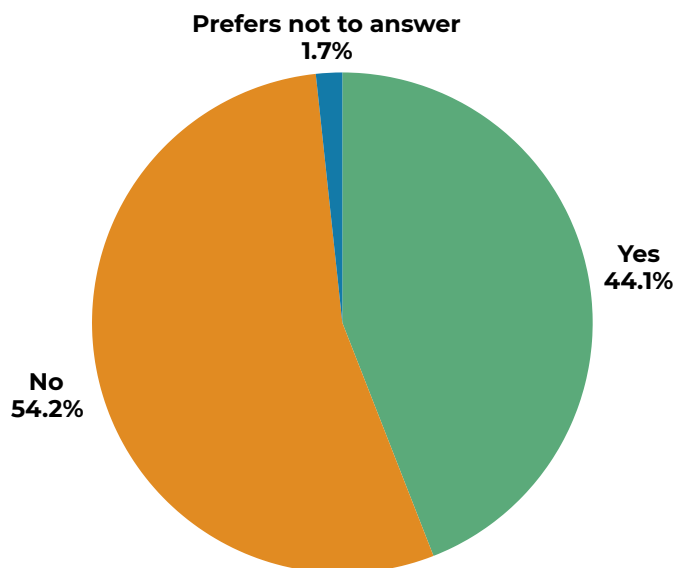
25F degrees or less outside



First Time Experiencing Homelessness?



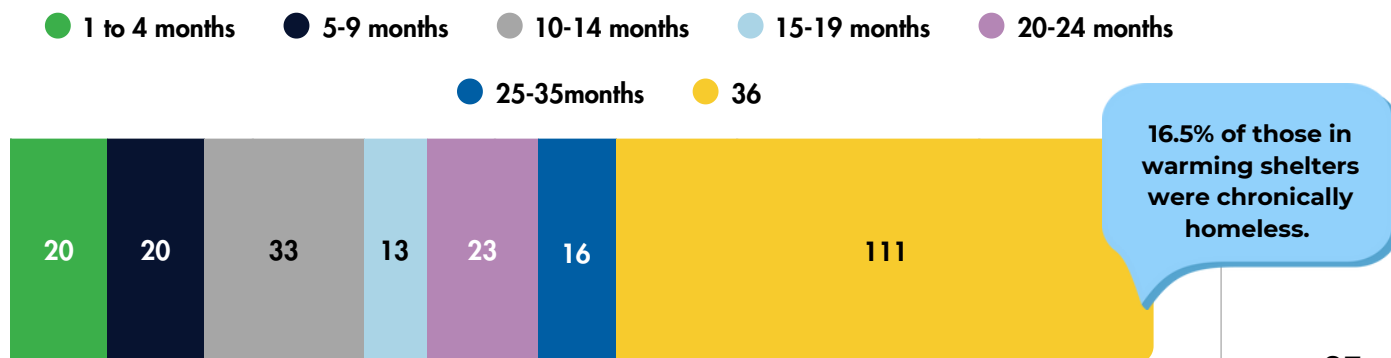
About 44.1 percent of warming center participants were experiencing homelessness for the first time, while 54.2 percent had previous episodes, and 1.7 percent declined to answer. These figures reflect both recent housing loss and unresolved cases from prior years, underscoring that many lack timely pathways back into housing.



Length of time



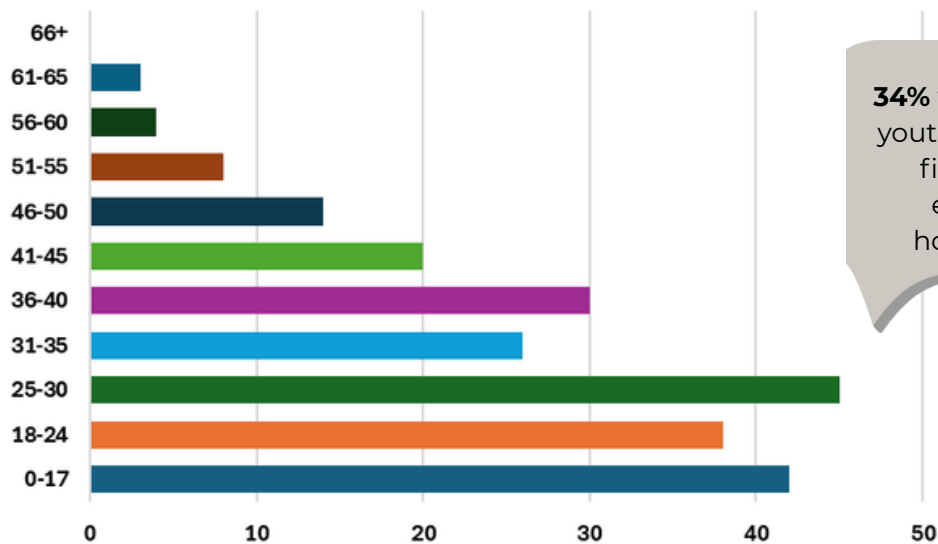
This chart shows how many months individuals in warming centers had been homeless within the past three years. Sixty-nine people, or 16.5 percent, met the federal definition of chronic homelessness, meaning they had been homeless for a year or more within the last three years and had a permanent disabling condition.



Age of first experience



Almost 1 in 3 warming center participants first experienced homelessness as children or youth under 25. Early episodes can disrupt education, limit earning potential, and increase the risk of recurring homelessness later in life. Those who enter homelessness at older ages often have fewer opportunities to recover financially or physically, making it harder to secure housing again.

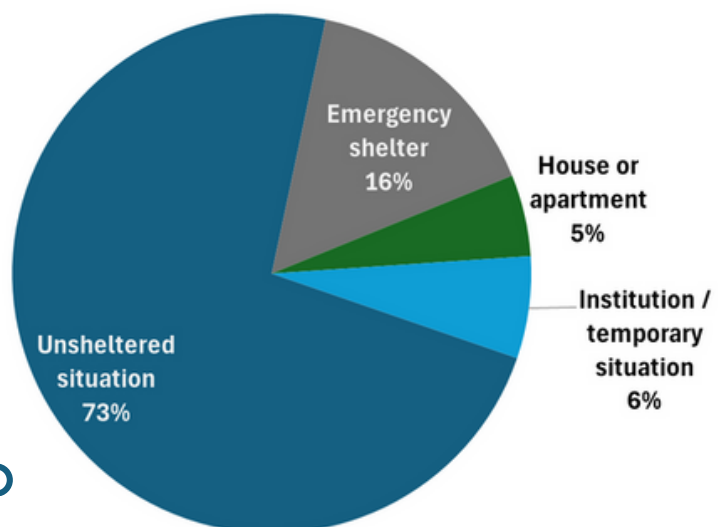


Living Situation BEFORE Entering Warming Center



Nearly three-quarters of warming center participants had been living unsheltered immediately before coming indoors, an estimated 304 individuals. Most had been staying on streets, in encampments, or in other places not meant for habitation. This shift indoors during extreme cold highlights that many will seek shelter when space is available.

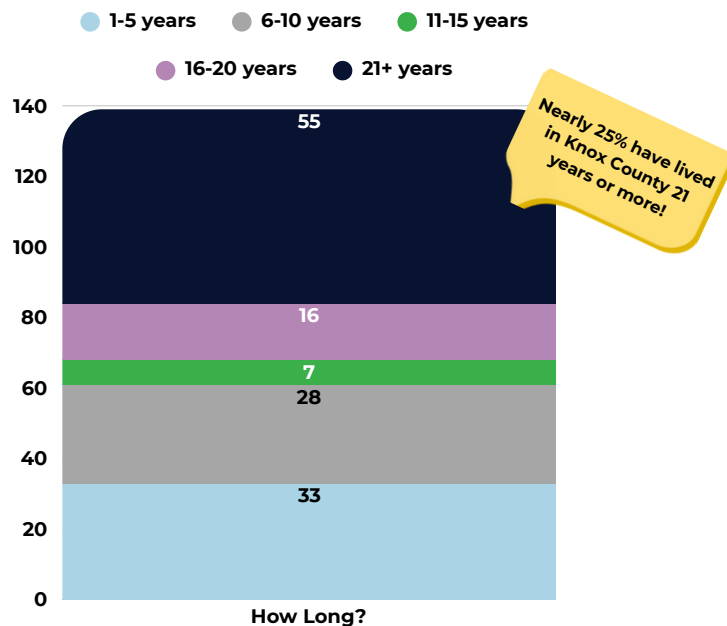
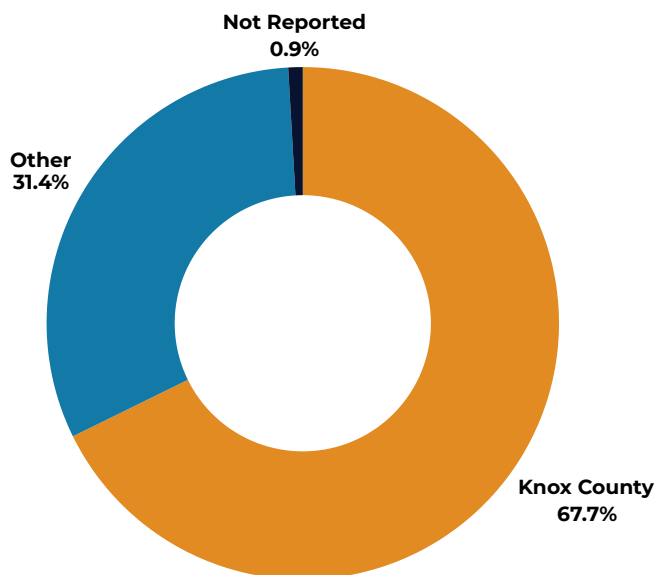
About 304 individuals were living unsheltered prior to staying in the warming center on PIT night.



Last Permanent Address



Most warming center guests were long-term residents of Knoxville-Knox County, with the majority having lived locally for more than five years before losing housing. Nearly one-quarter had lived in the county for 21 years or more. These patterns show that homelessness in warming centers is largely a local issue, affecting neighbors with deep roots in the community.



Demographics



Veteran 9.0%



Veterans make up around 6% of the population in Knoxville (US Census).

Physical Disability 30.5%



Around 12% of the population in Knoxville has a disability (US Census).

Substance Use 26.2%



Domestic Violence 12.3%



HIV/AIDS 5.2%



Families with Children 4.3%



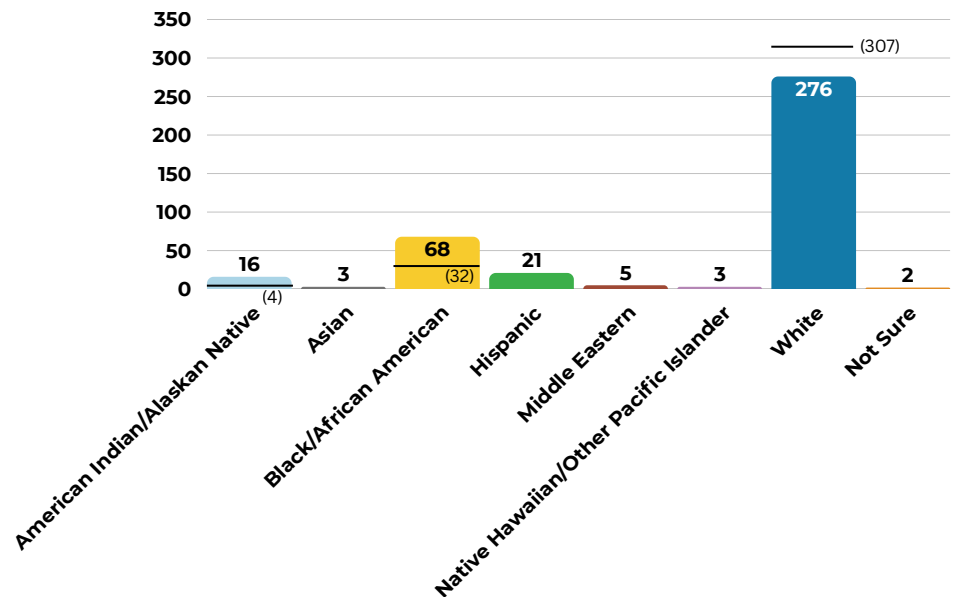
27

Demographics



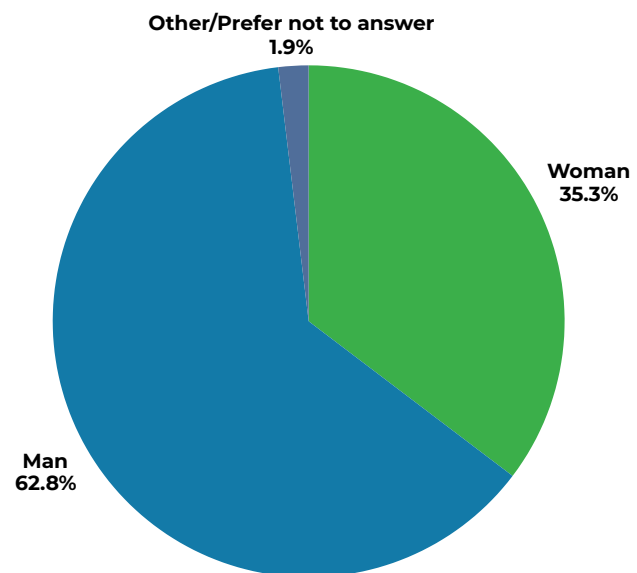
Race

Race reporting showed White participants slightly underrepresented and Black and American Indian participants slightly overrepresented compared to county census data (*black lines (#)*). Thirty participants identified with two or more races.



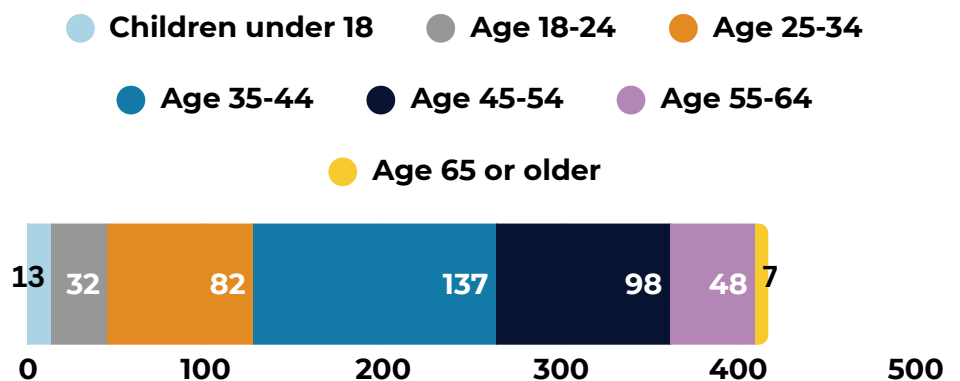
Sex

The male-to-female ratio in warming centers was similar to that in traditional emergency shelters, with roughly twice as many men as women.



Age

Participants ranged from children to older adults, with most between 35 and 54 years old. Nearly 50 youth and young adults were present on the night of the count, along with 32 children under 18.

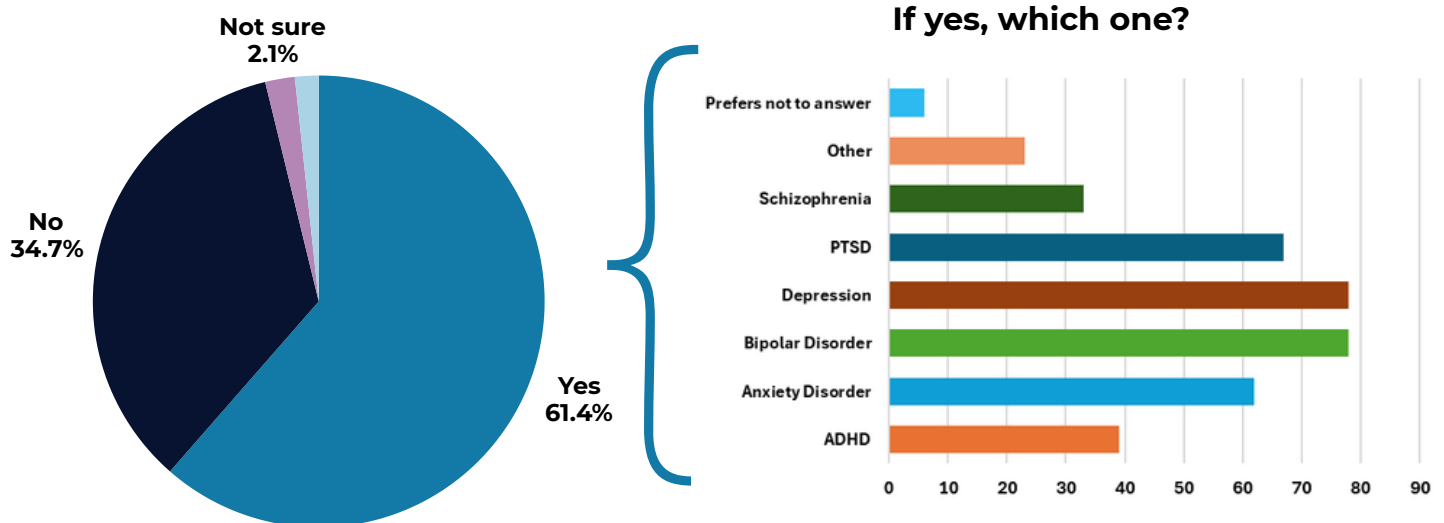


Mental Health Spotlight

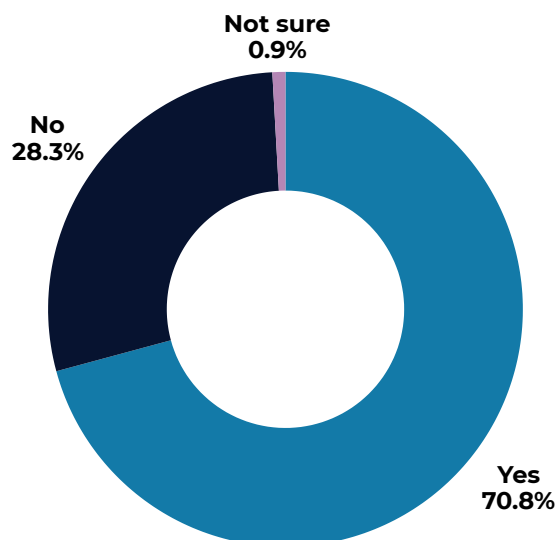


Experiencing homelessness is an ongoing traumatic event, with both immediate and lasting impacts. Serious mental health conditions can make it more difficult for outreach workers, medical teams, and first responders to connect individuals with services. Of the 417 people in warming centers, 236 completed surveys and answered questions about mental health.

Mental Health Condition



Mental Health Concern



Nearly 71% reported a mental health concern, and over 60% reported they had been formally diagnosed with a mental health condition.



Families in Shelter

Families with at least one child under the age of 18 often require different support structures to successfully exit homelessness into permanent housing. The impacts on families can be profound, and can limit opportunities to build intergenerational wealth.

8 Families in Emergency Shelter

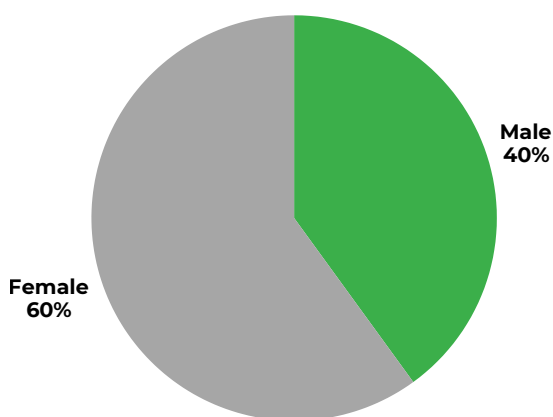
- 25 Individuals
- 16 children under the age of 18

5 Families accessed Warming Centers*

- 18 Individuals
- 13 children under the age of 18

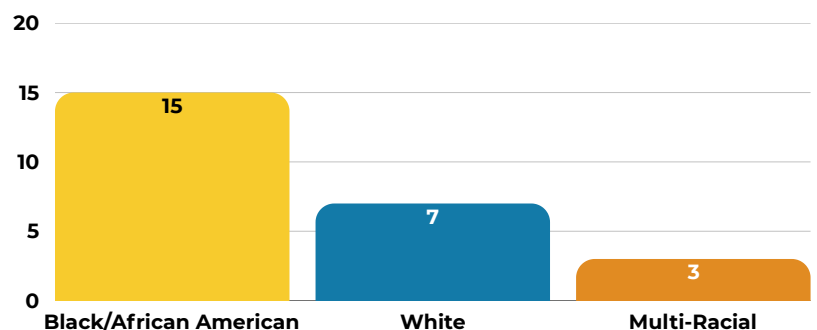
*additional demographics for these families are included with the warming center data.

Household Information in Emergency Shelter



Slightly more females than males were in families in emergency shelter.

Only 3 races were identified by families residing in emergency shelter on the night of the PIT count.



Single Households in Shelter

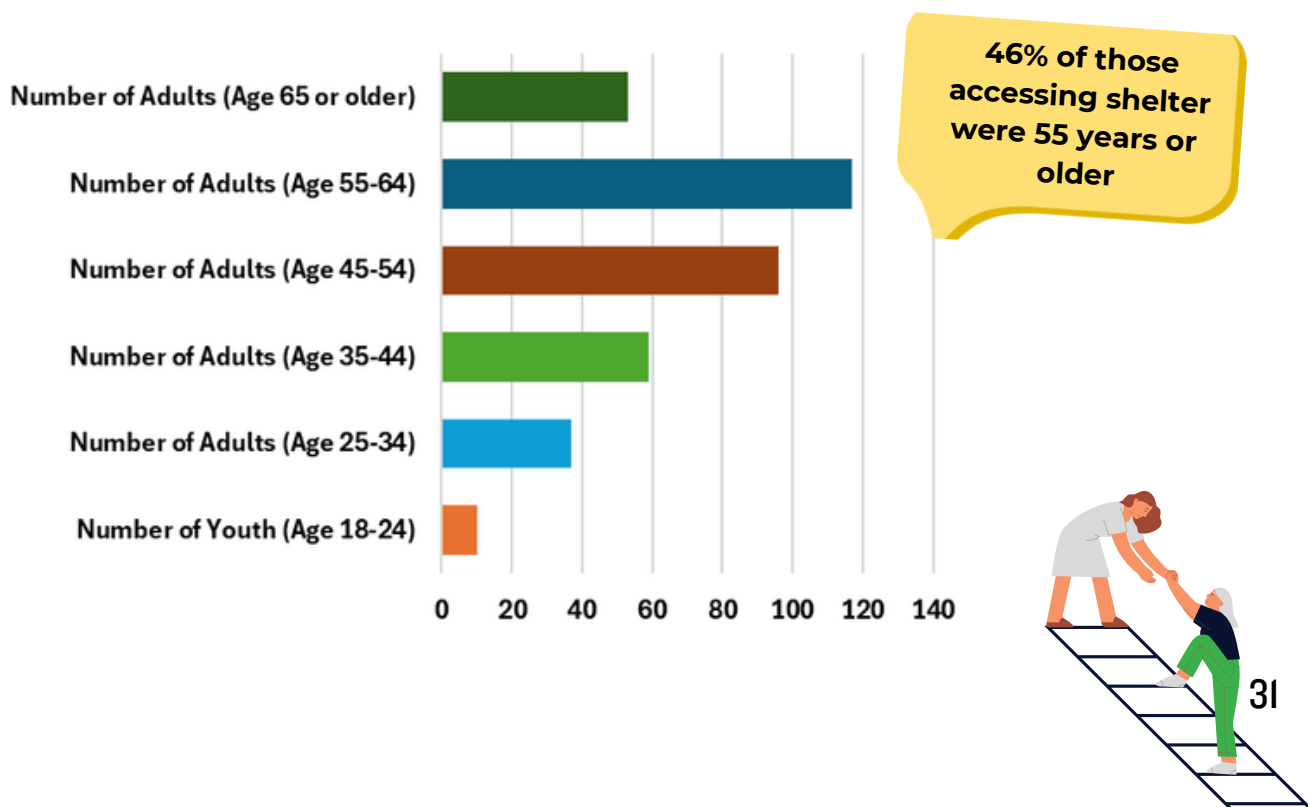


On the night of the PIT count, 372 single adults were in year-round emergency shelter, not including those in warming centers. These figures come directly from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Demographics - emergency shelter

Age

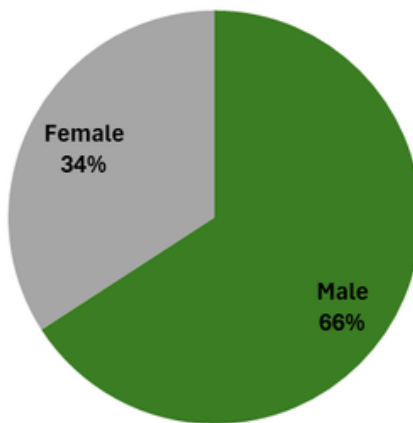
Most individuals in emergency shelter on the night of the PIT count were age 45 or older. There are no dedicated youth or young adult shelters in Knox County, and family shelter space is limited. As a result, most shelter beds serve single adults over 18. Older adults are more likely to live on fixed incomes; when displaced from a home or job, they often face greater difficulty replacing lost earnings, which increases the risk of long-term homelessness. Nearly half of those in shelter were 55 or older.



Demographics - emergency shelter

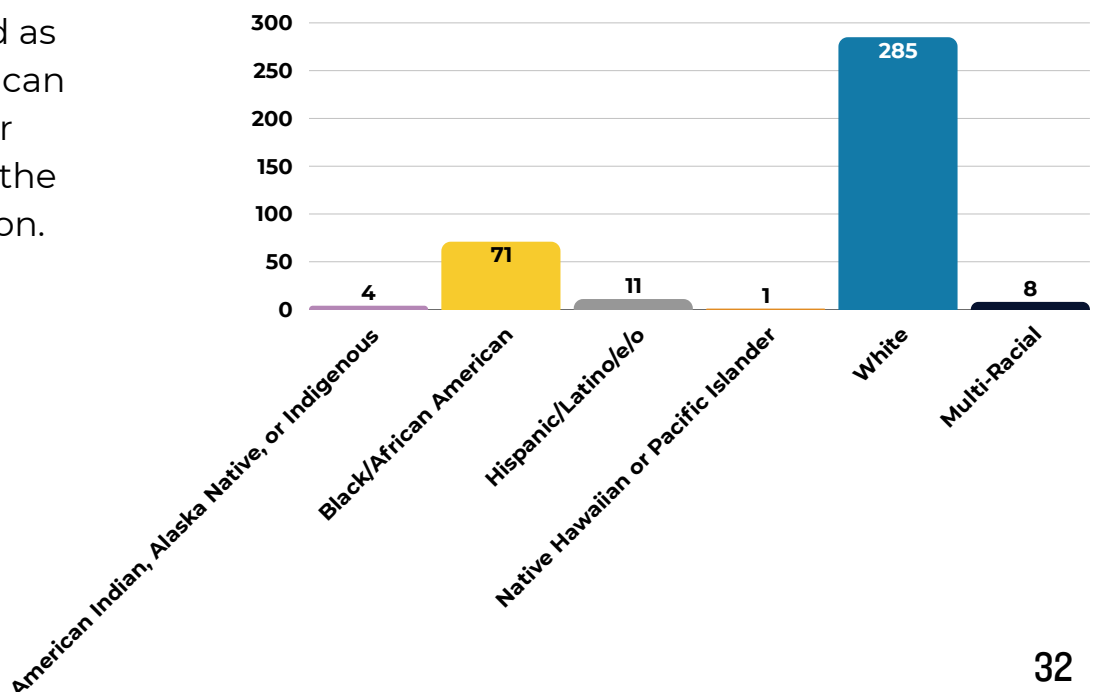
Sex

Some emergency shelters in Knox County have dedicated beds for women, but there is no women-only facility. Women experiencing homelessness are more likely to be fleeing domestic violence or unsafe situations and may have children, which limits the shelter options available to them.



Race

In Knoxville-Knox County, most emergency shelter residents identified as White or Black/African American, together making up 94% of the sheltered population.



Demographics - emergency shelter

Nearly one-third of shelter residents met the definition of chronic homelessness, which often requires longer-term support to secure permanent housing. Domestic violence was more often reported by women, though not exclusively.

Substance use and HIV/AIDS appear underreported, potentially due to concerns about stigma or losing shelter access under zero-tolerance rules.

Serious mental illness, reported by nearly one in five residents, can make housing placement more complex and may lead to increased security needs when community treatment resources are limited.

Veteran 5.0%



Chronic Homeless 32%



Substance Use 9.0%



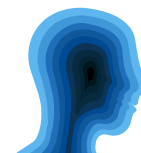
Domestic Violence 6.0%



HIV/AIDS >1%



Serious Mental Illness 19%



Transitional Housing Data



Transitional housing offers up to 24 months of rental assistance and case management to help individuals and families secure permanent housing. Data on the 115 people in transitional housing during the count came from HMIS, supplemented by voluntary reports from non-participating programs.

Most residents were single adults, with a smaller share of families. While data coverage was generally strong, some demographic details were not available for all participants.

Households in Transitional Housing

On the night of the count, transitional housing served 4 families and 103 single adults or young adults.

4 Families in Transitional Housing

- 12 Individuals
- 8 children under the age of 18

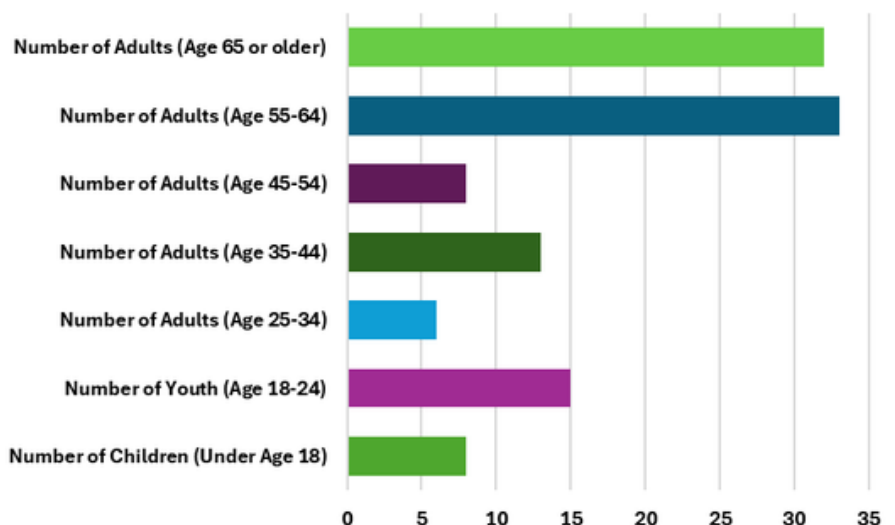
103 Youth, Young Adults & Single Adults in Transitional Housing

- 15 Individuals aged 18-24
- 32 Individuals aged 65 or older

Demographics - transitional housing

Age

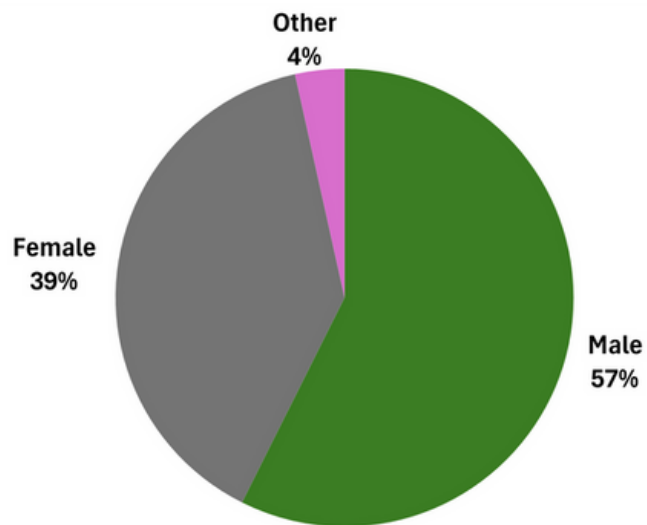
Most residents were adults 55 or older, followed by youth and young adults aged 18–24. Limited incomes and scarce affordable housing options can make the transition to permanent housing difficult for these groups.



Demographics - transitional housing

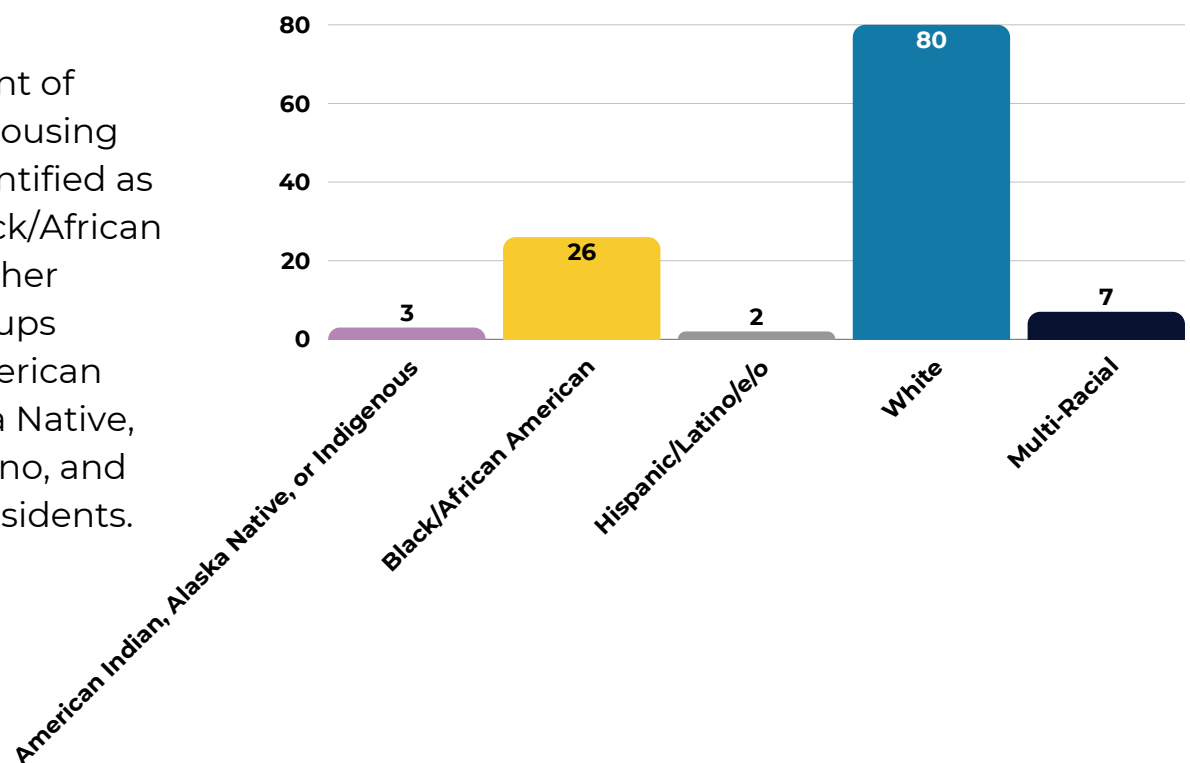
Sex

Men made up 57% of transitional housing residents and women 39%. The higher percentage of women in transitional housing is likely due to family households, while men over 55 remain the primary demographic served.



Race

Ninety percent of transitional housing residents identified as White or Black/African American. Other reported groups included American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, and multiracial residents.



Demographics - transitional housing

The high percentage of veterans reflects program-specific priorities. The low percentage for domestic violence survivors is due in part to the absence of a dedicated transitional housing program for this group.

Veteran 37%



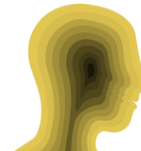
Domestic Violence 4%



Substance Use 22%



Serious Mental Illness 28%



Transitional Housing Wrap-Up

Transitional housing can provide critical stability on the path to permanent housing. Programs may pay up to 100 percent of a participant's rent during their stay, allowing time for education, job training, or recovery. For older adults, it can also serve as a bridge to permanent supportive housing when disabilities or fixed incomes limit housing options.

While some programs focus on youth and young adults, transitional housing can also help those facing chronic homelessness. Community partners recently launched a joint Transitional Housing/Rapid Rehousing project for homeless youth through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP).

Youth, Young Adult & School Data

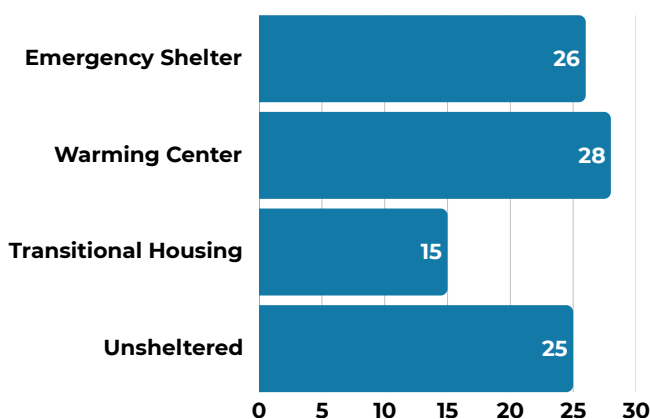


Youth and young adult homelessness can have lifelong impacts, including disrupted education, missed medical care, and poor nutrition. This year, Knox County Schools' McKinney-Vento liaisons—school staff responsible for identifying and supporting students experiencing homelessness—partnered with the count to survey students they knew were unstably housed, providing a clearer picture of the issue locally. Surveys were not completed with all youth, and the data below represents 53 surveys of youth who stayed unsheltered and in warming centers. The combined youth data integrates what was collected in HMIS and the completed youth surveys.

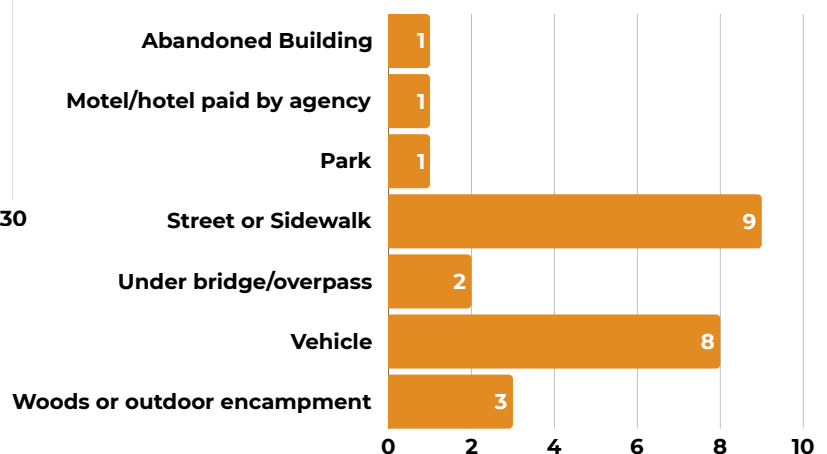
Knoxville-Knox County is in its first Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) grant cycle, bringing \$1.8 million over two years (2025-2026) to expand services for homeless youth and young adults.

Where YYA Stayed on PIT Night

On the night of the count, youth and young adults aged 0–24 stayed in various locations. Most were in emergency shelter or warming centers, but nearly one-quarter were unsheltered.



For those who remained outside the chart on the right shows where they stayed. Vehicles or on the street were the most common.



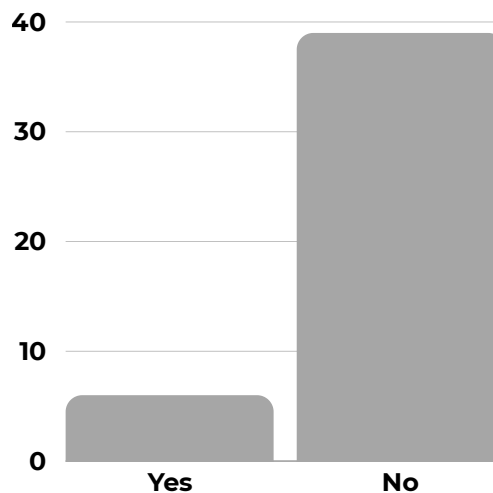


Unsheltered Survey Data - YYA

This survey question, asked only of youth and young adults (YYA), helps gauge vulnerability and identify family situations not captured elsewhere.

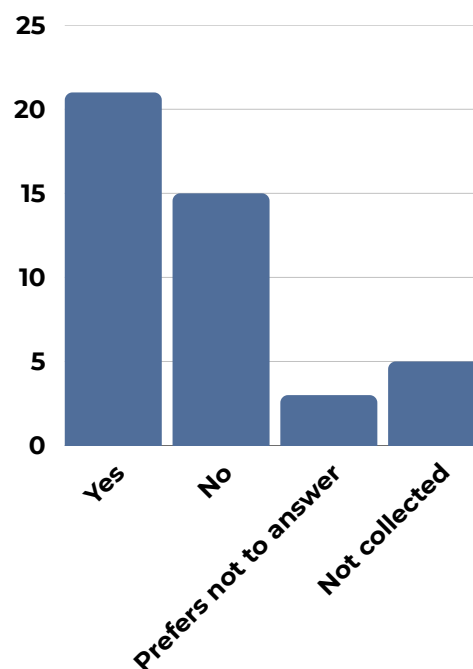
Have you been staying with a parent or caregiver?

Most youth were their own head of household and were not unsheltered with their family.



Forced by a parent or guardian to leave home?

Slightly more youth and young adults reported being forced to leave home than those who left voluntarily. This separation can happen for many reasons, but the result is often the same—loss of stability and the trauma of homelessness. Such experiences can create lasting strain on family relationships and make it harder for youth to regain stable housing.

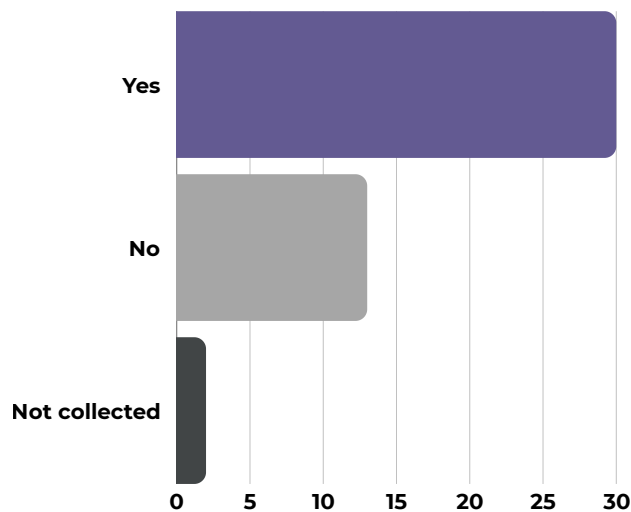




Unsheltered Survey Data - YYA

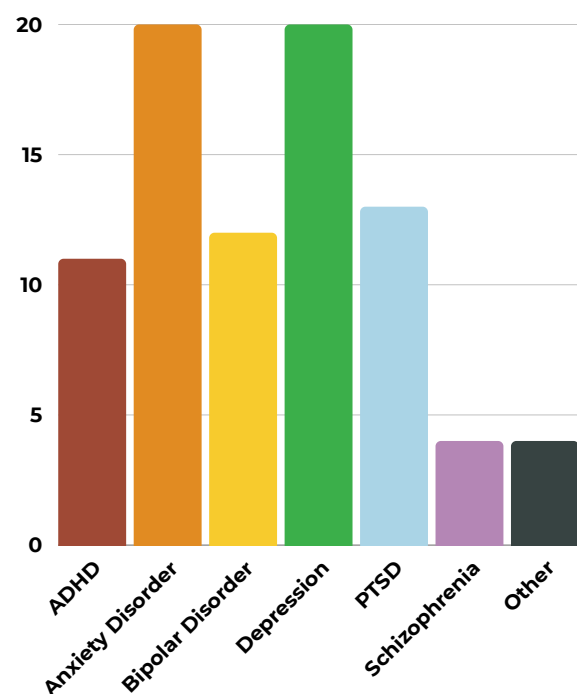
About twice as many youth and young adults reported having a mental health condition as those who did not. Access to care often depends on their relationship with a parent or caregiver and whether they can navigate enrollment in Medicaid or other healthcare programs.

Mental Health Condition? if yes, which one?



Anxiety and depression were the most commonly reported conditions, followed by PTSD, ADHD, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. These results likely reflect the impact of homelessness itself, as well as preexisting conditions.

Youth may be able to advocate for themselves, but adult-oriented systems can be difficult to navigate, leading them to prioritize immediate survival needs over mental health treatment. Stable housing is a key factor in enabling treatment.



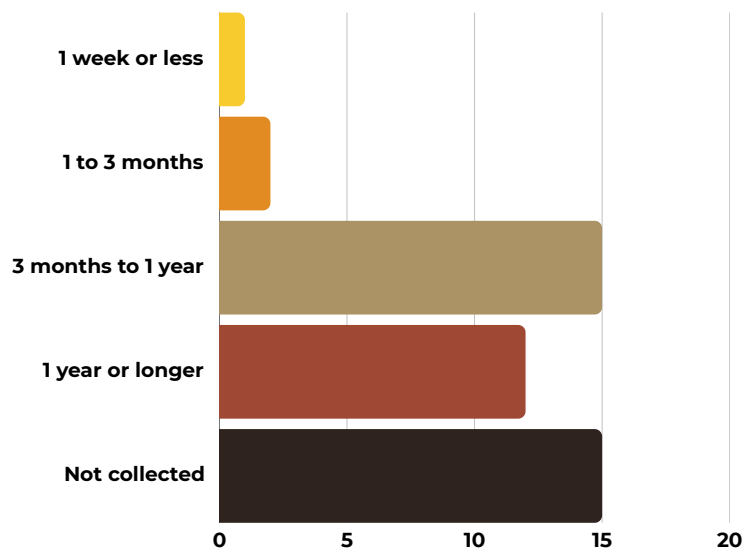


Unsheltered Survey Data - YYA

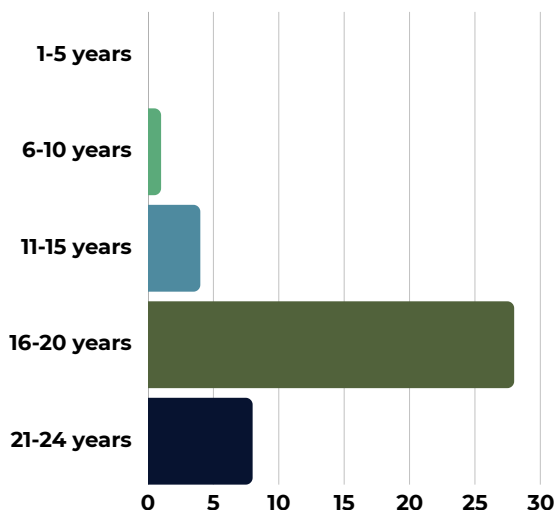
Many youth and young adults did not report how long they had been homeless. Among those who did, a significant share had been unsheltered for a year or more. Limited and hard-to-access resources contribute to these extended periods, increasing the risk of long-term trauma and eroding hope for stability.

Duration of Homelessness

The longer homelessness continues, the more likely it is to cause lasting trauma and compounding negative effects. Limited access to services can extend these periods, and prolonged instability can erode hope, making recovery more challenging.



How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?



Many youth reported first experiencing homelessness as children, with the largest share between ages 11 and 15. Early exposure can create ongoing challenges, increasing the risk of repeated homelessness later in life—especially for those with limited support systems.

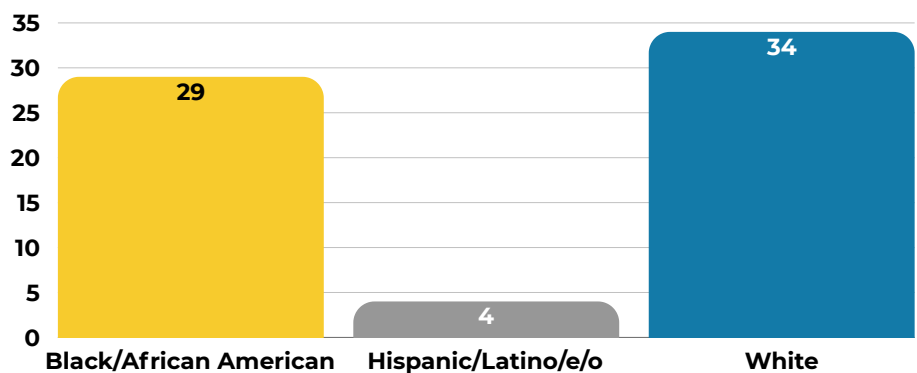


Combined Youth Data - Sheltered & Unsheltered

For this section, unsheltered survey responses were combined with data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to reflect overall youth and young adult (YYA) engagement across the homeless system. Where available, data includes both sources; in other cases, only one source was used.

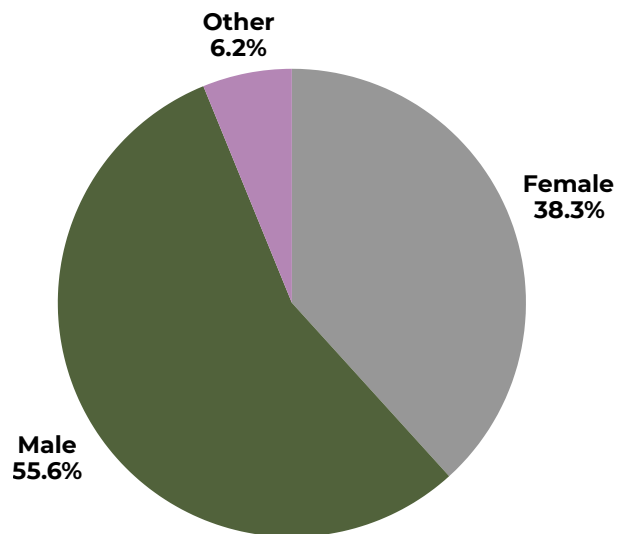
Race

The racial distribution of YYA experiencing homelessness showed a closer balance between White and Black/African American individuals than in the single adult population.



Sex

Just over half of YYA identified as male, similar to patterns in the unsheltered and sheltered single adult populations. Families were the only group where females made up a larger share.



Veteran: 1% (1 person)



Chronic Homeless: 11%



**Domestic Violence:
27.2%***



Substance Use: 5%

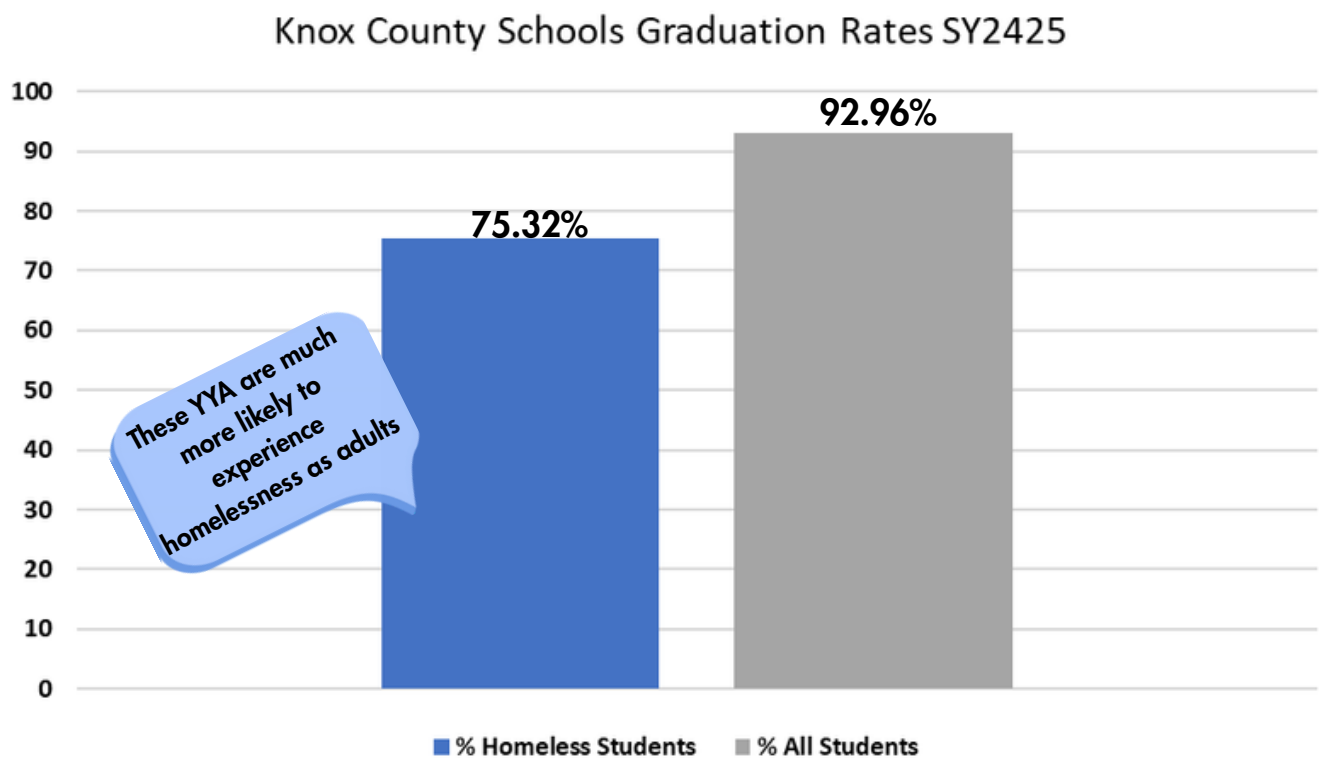


*A notably high percentage of Youth and Young Adults reported experiencing domestic violence, which includes violence from parents, caregivers, or intimate partners.



Knox County School Data

In the 2024–25 school year, graduation rates for homeless students in Knox County Schools were nearly 20% lower than for all students—75.32% compared to 92.96%. This gap signals higher risks for future homelessness, as educational attainment strongly influences long-term stability.



As of November 2024, 290 homeless students had been served through McKinney-Vento, a federal program ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to public education and support services.

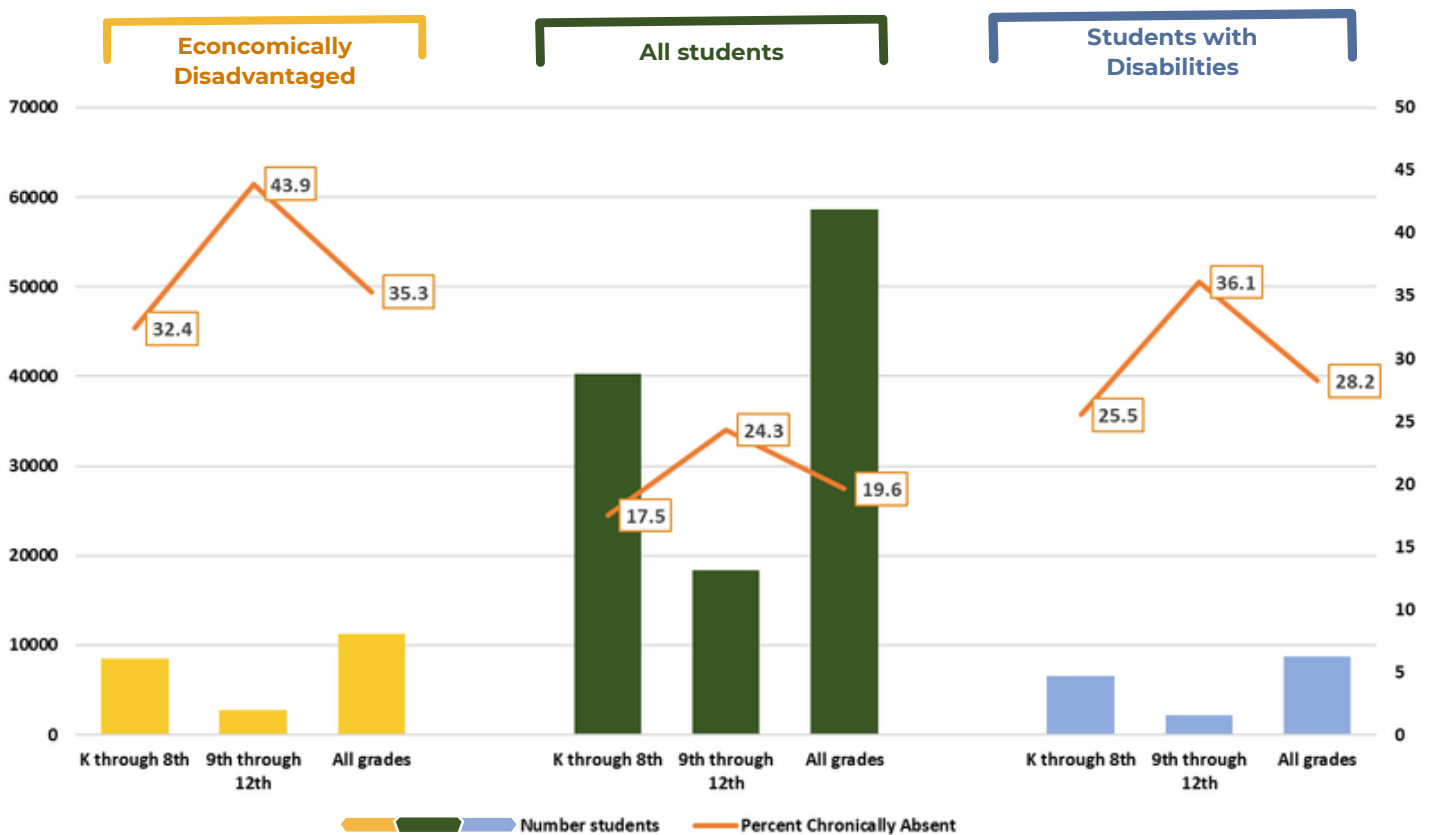


School Data

Chronic absence rates are significantly higher among economically disadvantaged students—which includes many experiencing homelessness—than among their peers. Students with disabilities also show elevated absence rates.

Chronic absence reduces educational achievement and contributes to lower graduation rates, as shown on the previous page. Addressing these patterns is key to supporting families in crisis and preventing youth homelessness.

Chronic Absence





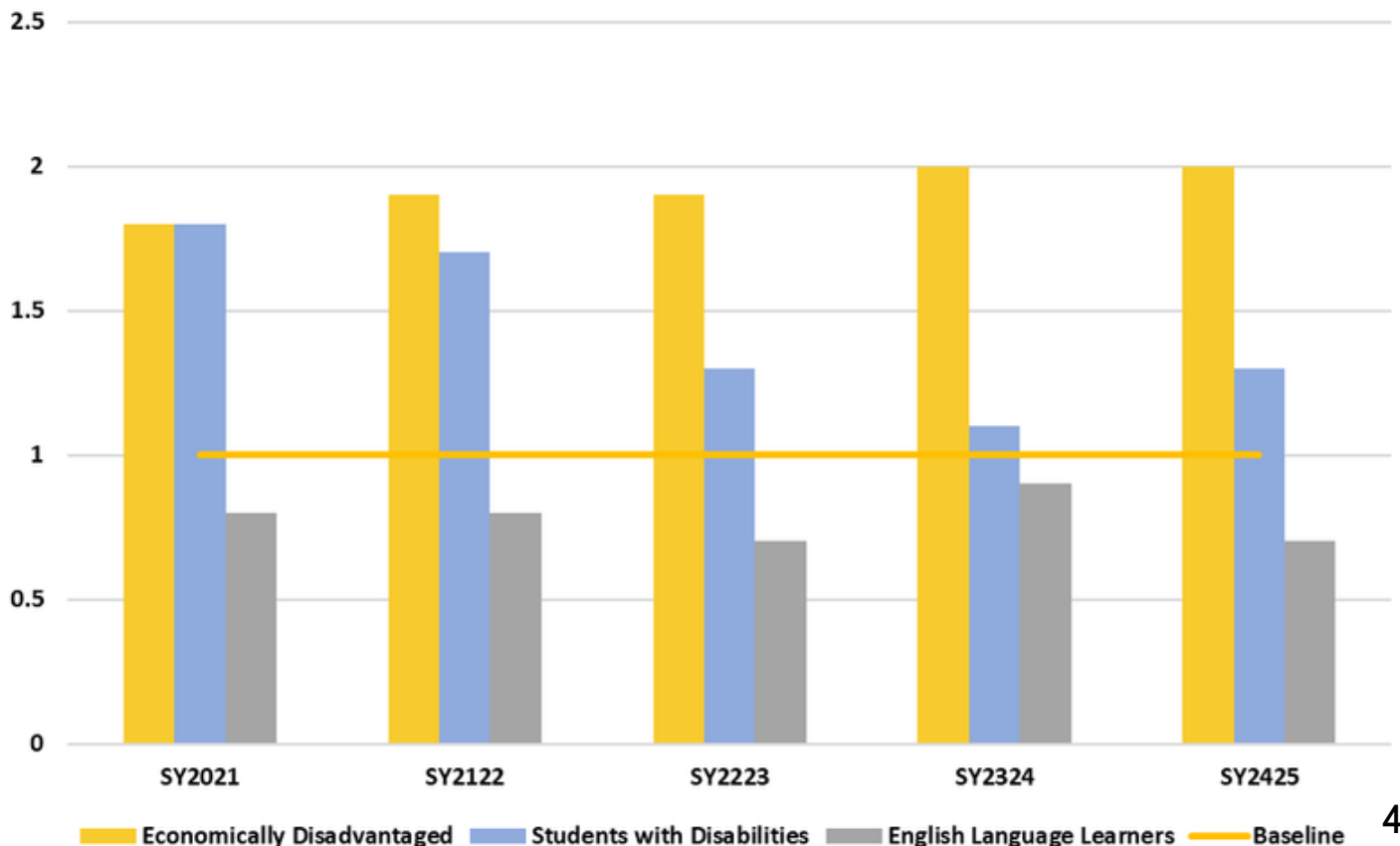
School Data

This chart shows the likelihood ratio for receiving an out-of-school suspension, by student demographic. A baseline of 1.0 represents an average likelihood; bars above 1.0 indicate a higher chance of suspension, while bars below indicate a lower chance.

In the 2024–25 school year, economically disadvantaged students were twice as likely to be suspended as the baseline, while English language learners were about 25% less likely.

Out-of-school suspensions disrupt learning and can set students back academically, making it harder to graduate. The data underscores the role economic hardship plays in school discipline outcomes.

Discipline: Out of School Suspensions





Housing Inventory Count

The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is conducted alongside the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count each year to provide context for the numbers collected. It tracks the total number of available beds in participating shelter and housing programs, as well as how many were occupied on the night of the PIT Count.

The tables below show each participating emergency shelter, their capacity, and the percentage of beds filled. This helps identify gaps between available shelter and the number of people needing a place to stay.

Emergency Shelter

Name of Program	Total Beds Available	Total Beds on PIT night	% Capacity
KARM Overnight	384	352	92%
Salvation Army Joy Baker Center	17	16	94%
Family Promise of Knoxville - ES	14	9	64%
CCETN - ES	10	4	40%
McNabb Center - Runaway Host Homes	4	0	0%
Salvation Army - ES Bridge of Hope	30	25	83%
Keenan Grimes - ES	20	23	115%
Magnolia Warming Center - ES	67	67	100%
Salvation Army - Warming Center - ES	209	209	100%
Fountain City Warming Center - ES	32	32	100%
Cokesbury Warming Center - ES	27	27	100%
Vestal Warming Center - ES	31	31	100%



Transitional Housing

Name of Project	Total Beds Available	Total Beds on PIT night	% Capacity
YWCA--Keys of Hope	20	6	30%
Steps House - TH ("VA GPD")	45	39	87%
CCETN - TH	37	37	100%
Salvation Army Bootstrap: TH-RRH Tier 1	23	7	30%
Magnolia UMC - Hope House (F) TH - Non Part	9	9	100%
Bryant's Bridge - TH	5	5	100%

Sharing Gratitude



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend our deepest gratitude to the many individuals and organizations whose time, dedication, and resources made the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count possible. This work would not be achievable without the collaborative effort of our partners, volunteers, and community members who share the commitment to understanding and addressing homelessness in Knoxville-Knox County. Your contributions help us identify needs, secure resources, and move toward solutions that ensure everyone has access to safe, stable housing.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Your ongoing work provides daily support to our unhoused neighbors, and your willingness to participate in the PIT Count helps us connect people to critical services. We appreciate your dedication to making homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

PIT VOLUNTEERS

Your time and engagement made this count possible. Thank you for braving the weather, listening to stories, and ensuring we collected accurate, meaningful data. Your efforts are invaluable.

SHELTER & WARMING SHELTER STAFF

Thank you for diligently collecting and reviewing the data that make this report possible. This includes staff at emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and warming centers, whose work ensures the count is accurate and reflective of community needs. Your commitment to accuracy helps create solutions that are responsive and effective.

Most importantly, we thank our unhoused neighbors for trusting us with their time, their voices, and their stories. Your willingness to share your experiences is essential to building compassionate, evidence-based solutions that work.



Definitions

Chronically Homeless Individual

An individual with a disability who has been continuously homeless for one year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of home-lessness in the last three years where the combined length of time homeless on those occasions is at least 12 months.

Congregate Shelter

An emergency shelter where the residents share a common sleeping area, and may have other communal facilities.

Continuum of Care (CoC)

A local planning body responsible for coordinating the full range of homeless-ness services in a geographic area. The great Knoxville-Knox County region represents CoC TN-502.

Disability

A self-identified physical, mental, and/or behavioral health condition that impacts an individual's ability to perform certain daily activities. No verification of disability is required for the PIT.

Emergency Shelter

A facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter to homeless people. Can be either night-by-night or continuous stay.

Encampment

An outdoor area, either private or public, where multiple tents, man-made structures, or other impromptu dwellings are situated.

Homeless

A person who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC)

Provides an annual inventory of beds that assist people in the CoC who are experiencing or leaving homelessness.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

A federally mandated information system that allows for the secure and private sharing of project participation data.

Occupancy Rate

The percentage of available beds that are occupied on the night of the PIT count.

People in Families with Children

Are people who are experiencing homelessness as part of a household that has at least one adult (age 18 and older) and one child (under age 18).

Sheltered Homelessness

Refers to people who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens.

Transitional Age Homeless Youth (18-24)

Are people under age 24 who are not in a family with other children (under age 18) or accompanied by a parent or guardian during an episode of homelessness.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (under 18)

Are people under age 18 in households with only children who are not part of a family with (other) children or accompanied by a parent or guardian during an episode of homelessness.

Unsheltered Homelessness

Refers to people whose primary nighttime location is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for people (e.g. abandoned building, doorway, vehicle, park).

Vehicle/RV

Any car or recreational vehicle, whether self-powered or towable that is utilized as a primary place of habitation. Also called live-a-boards, or homestead vehicles.

Veteran

Refers to anyone who self-identifies as having served in the United States armed forces. Verification of Veteran status is not required for the PIT, however may be required for veteran specific homeless services.

Citations

Appalachian Justice Research Center, Eviction Report: <https://ajrc.utk.edu/ajrc-releases-first-public-report-detailing-the-scope-of-evictions-in-knox-county/>

City of Knoxville, public data: <https://www.knoxvilletn.gov/government/opendata>

KnoxHMIS, Community Dashboard:
<https://knoxhmis.sworpswebapp.sworps.utk.edu/dashboard/>

Knox County Schools, public data: <https://www.knoxschools.org/impact>

US Census Bureau, Knox County TN, Quick Reference Facts:
https://data.census.gov/profile/Knox_County,_Tennessee?g=050XX00US47093

US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Annual Housing and Assessment Report: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/ahar.html>.



PREPARED BY:
KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY OFFICE OF
HOUSING STABILITY
WWW.KNOXHOUSING.ORG

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION**



+865-318-2603



www.knoxtnhousing.org



405 Dante Road, Knoxville, 37918