

BALTIMORE CITY CONTINUUM OF CARE

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Report

2020



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF
HOMELESS SERVICES



ABOUT

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is a HUD-mandated assessment that provides a snapshot of how many people are experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in a community on a given night in January. This year, Baltimore City's PIT Count assessed both sheltered persons staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing and unsheltered persons living on the streets or other places not meant for human habitation.

A Comparison of Baltimore's PIT Counts from 2018 to 2020

	2018	2019	2020	2018-20 % Change
Sheltered	1962	1914	1895	-2%
In Emergency Shelter	1152	1140	1147	0%
In Transitional Housing	810	774	748	-7%
Unsheltered	546*	380	298	-45%*
Total	2508*	2294	2193	-12%

*In 2018, Baltimore did not conduct an unsheltered count. HUD's policy for when CoCs elect to conduct unsheltered counts only every other year is to add numbers from the previous year's unsheltered count to approximate the total.

While the PIT Count doesn't capture all the people who experience homelessness over the course of a year, it is the only HUD measure that counts people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, which HUD defines as people living on the streets or places not meant for human habitation. Baltimore's unsheltered count relies on hundreds of trained staff and volunteers to conduct two nights of street counts and three days of surveys at drop-in sites. Surveys administered at drop-in sites collect information about the night of the count.

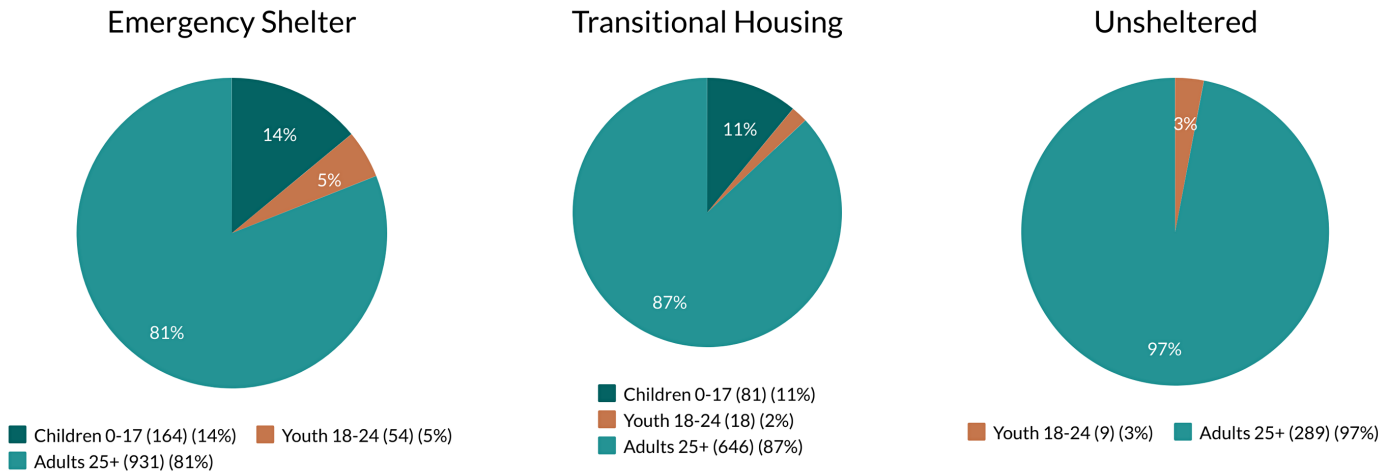
Three years PIT Count Trend

While there has been a continuous decline in the number of clients served in Transitional Housing, the number of transitional housing beds offered on the night of the PIT Count increased between 2019 and 2020. The number of persons staying in emergency shelters has remained constant, while the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness has decreased between 2019 and 2020. **The unsheltered count can be impacted by a number of uncontrollable factors, such as weather conditions and people's willingness to participate in the survey.**

The 2020 PIT Count only accounts for 19% of the approximately 11,800 homeless persons served in Baltimore City between July 2018 and June 2019.



Sheltered and Unsheltered Populations, by Age



*'Emergency Shelter' includes all the City's emergency shelters and its two safe haven programs.

Race and ethnicity

Homelessness disproportionately affects Black Baltimoreans. While they represent 63% of the City's population, Black or African-American accounted for 71% of all people experiencing homelessness in Baltimore City on the night of the PIT Count.

	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Multiple Races	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Black or African-American	White	Hispanic/Latinx
Total	1%	1%	2%	0%	71%	25%	4%
Emergency Shelter	1%	1%	2%	1%	78%	17%	2%
Transitional Housing	1%	0%	2%	0%	66%	31%	6%
Unsheltered	0%	1%	1%	0%	59%	42%	3%

Emergency Shelter vs. Transitional Housing

Emergency Shelters (ES) provide people experiencing an episode of homelessness with a safe, low-barrier, and temporary refuge—and supportive services needed to quickly regain housing stability. Eligible populations include families and people fleeing intimate partner violence. **Transitional Housing (TH)** provides people experiencing homelessness with shelter and supportive services for up to two years with the goal of moving them into independent living. Transitional Housing Programs are usually dedicated to specific populations, such as veterans or individuals with substance abuse disorders. In Baltimore City, *The Journey Home* funds Transitional Housing for veterans and youth.

Gender

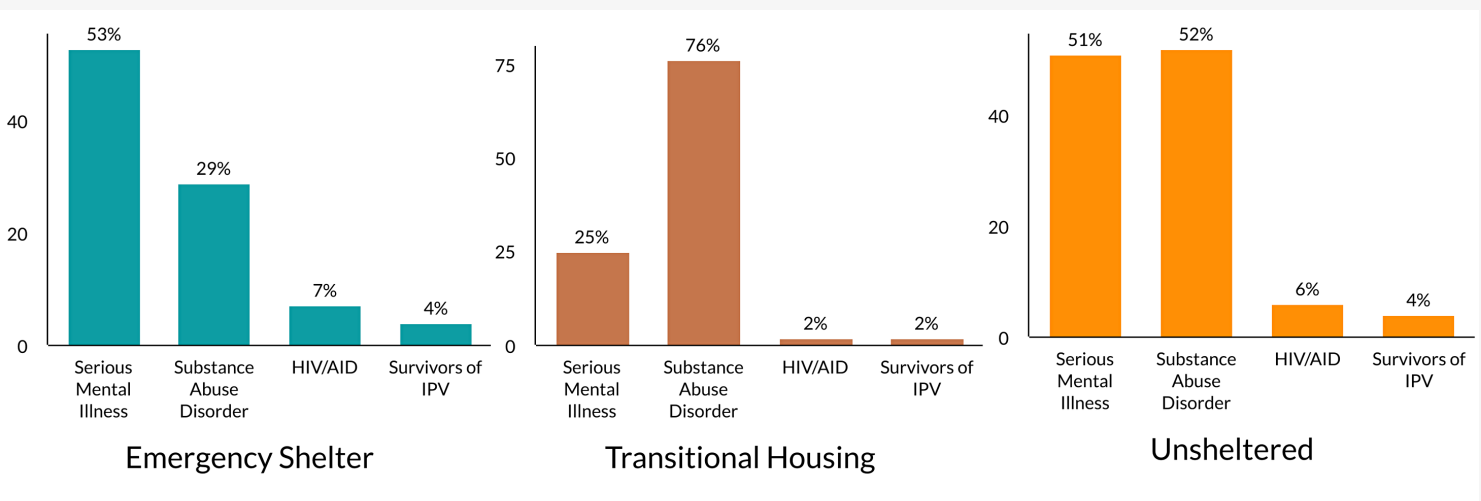
On the night of the PIT Count, 64% (1,399) of those counted identified as men. This figure is consistent with local and national data, which show that homelessness disproportionately affects men. 36% (782) of people surveyed on the night of the count identified as women. 11 respondents were Transgender Individuals and one respondent identified as gender non-conforming. National figures show that while most homeless individuals are men, gender minorities are more likely to experience unsheltered homelessness than men or women.

Special populations: Chronically Homeless and Veterans

HUD defines chronic homelessness as having a disabling condition and 12 months of continuous homelessness, either consecutively in the past year or over four episodes in the past 3 years. HUD also states that anyone who entered Transitional Housing (TH) as a chronically homeless Individual loses that status after living in TH for 7 days. Chronic households are prioritized for subsidized housing resources, such as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Re-Housing (RRH).

	Chronically Homeless	Veterans
Total	27%	11%
Emergency Shelter	34%	7%
Transitional Housing	0%	19%
Unsheltered	69%	5%

Percentage of homeless adults with health and safety concerns





Veterans make up approximately 12% of the national population of homeless individuals. The U.S Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with the U. S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), funds several housing programs that specifically serve veterans. These programs include transitional housing programs.

The 2020 PIT Count's survey included a series of questions for unsheltered persons designed to shed more light on their past experiences, current situation, and future housing goals.



Life experiences

Respondents were asked whether they had any of the life experiences listed below. Their responses highlight the many difficulties faced by people experiencing homelessness. The fact that a large number of homeless persons have also interacted with the criminal justice system indicates that people experiencing homelessness are at increased risk for incarceration and, conversely, interaction with the criminal justice system leaves a person particularly vulnerable to an episode of homelessness. This reality also sheds light on other related issues, such as the criminalization of homelessness and the lack of services for those reentering society.

Was in jail/prison/juvenile detention	58%
I've stayed in a treatment or inpatient healthcare	42%
Was homeless as a child	11%
I've had to exchange sex for money, shelter, or housing	10%
Aged out and / or ran away from foster care	9%
I've been banned or kicked out from emergency shelter	8%
None of the above	15%

Primary cause(s) of current homelessness

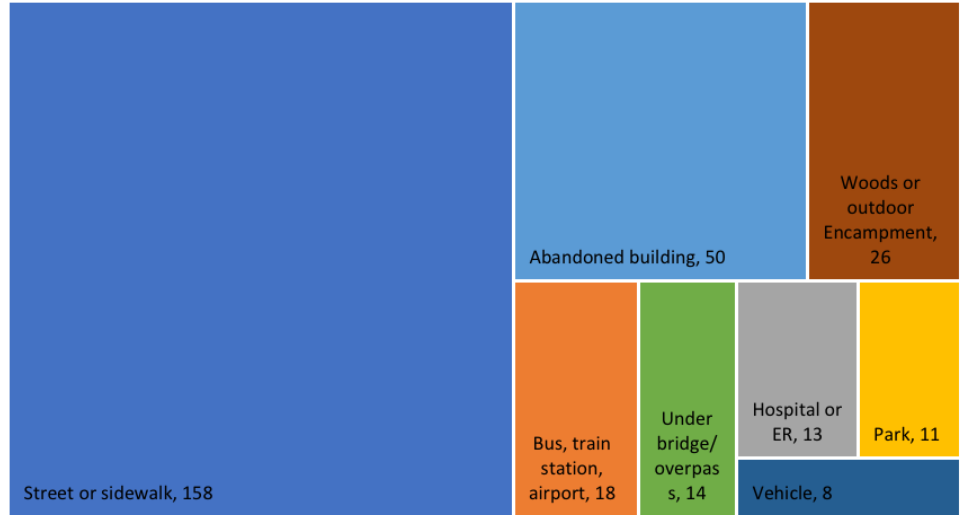
Respondents were asked about the primary cause(s) of their current homelessness. The most common responses show that factors such as employment, interpersonal relationships, and health conditions can significantly impact a person's likelihood of becoming homeless.

Lost employment/job	26%
Inadequate income or couldn't afford rent	25%
Kicked out by family/friends	25%
Evicted from owned or rented unit	20%
Left jail/prison/juvenile detention	10%
Left housing due to unsafe environment	8%
Substance abuse or other health issues	8%
Death of a loved one and other familial issues	5%
Left housing due to unit conditions	4%
Kicked out of permanent housing program	3%
Left housing program because of rules/restrictions	2%
Left or was kicked out due to my sexual orientation	0%



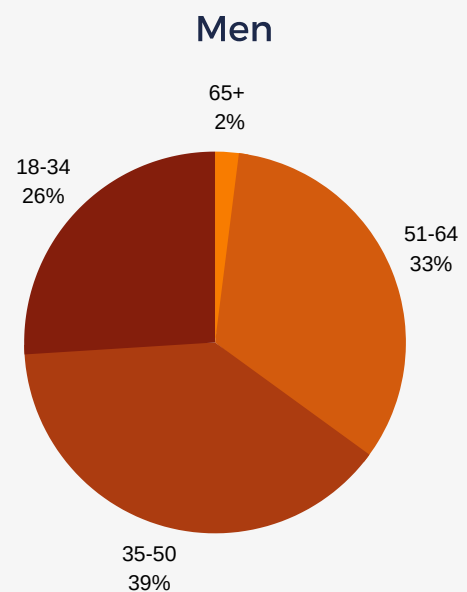
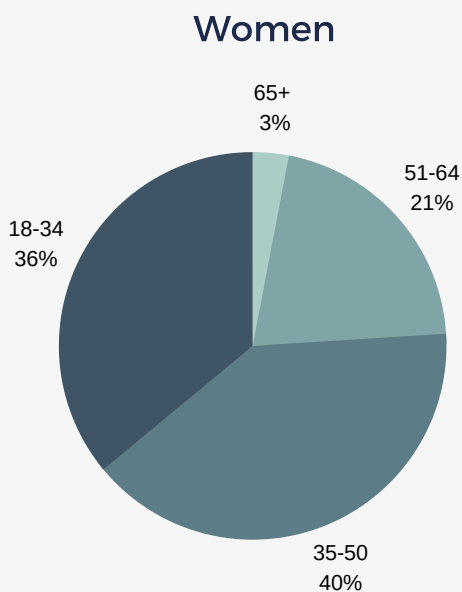
Where did you sleep last night?

"Unsheltered homelessness" refers to people sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. Below are the locations where unsheltered persons slept the night of the 2020 PIT Count.



Gender by Age Group

By breaking down the gender of individuals by age, it appears that women who were unsheltered on the night of the PIT Count tended to be younger, with an average age of 39. This figure is different for unsheltered men, whose average age was 42—and reflects national trends, which show that men born between 1955 and 1965 make up about a third of the total homeless population.



Gender minorities excluded from chart to respect confidentiality



Parenting while homeless

20% of adult women and 15% of adult men indicated that they were parenting or expecting within the next 9 months. None of these respondents were found on the streets with their children on the night of the count. Parents experiencing a housing crisis face difficult parenting choices. Some of them have to leave their children in the care of friends or family, while others keep their children with them when they move to a shelter. Parents experiencing homelessness are able to live with their children once they are matched with subsidized housing resources.

Desired Housing Options

Respondents were also asked to choose their top three most desired housing options from a set list. Almost all were interested in finding housing, as only 2% indicated that they wanted to remain unsheltered. This table shows the top five responses. The majority of respondents indicated that they wanted long term supportive services of some kind, but many indicated that they were willing to move into housing with limited financial support.

Voucher with supportive services	53%
Help with security deposit and first month's rent	41%
Voucher with no supportive services	32%
Short term rental assistance with supportive services	28%
Transitional housing program	23%



Least Desired Housing Options

Additionally, the survey asked respondents what kinds of housing they least desired. Almost 20% of respondents indicated that they would accept any housing option. The Journey Home is currently working to transform the City's crisis response and shelter systems. Ongoing efforts include creating a more inviting environment for those living on the streets.

Shelter	39%
Group home/Assisted Living	36%
Living with family/friends	31%
Transitional housing program	20%
None of the Above	17%



The majority of homeless adults surveyed want to work. 61% of respondents were interested in employment, and 5% were already employed.