



Southern Nevada Lived X Team

Older Adults Aged 60+ Community Snapshot

Introduction

From November 2025 to January 2026, the Southern Nevada Lived X Team asked a sample of 100 individuals experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness around the Las Vegas metropolitan area who were over the age of 59 years old a survey of 11 questions in an effort to understand why so many individuals of their age are living without a home. Each survey participant was compensated with a \$25 gift card and, in many cases, water, hygiene products, or other outreach items. Answers were self-identified, meaning the survey taker did not assume on behalf of the participant. Many surveys were conducted in the Corridor of Hope, between Main Street and Las Vegas Boulevard, and Owens and Foremaster Lane. A large minority were conducted at the Nevada Homeless Alliance's Project Homeless Connect event at World Market Center in mid-November 2025. Most surveys were conducted in the daytime hours; however, some were conducted during the evening hours.

Question Breakdown

In response to the first question, "How long have you been experiencing homelessness?", 63% of respondents said, "One year or more." 18 out of 100 individuals said, "6 months to 1 year," and 19 respondents answered that they were experiencing homelessness for less than 6 months. This number alone tells us the housing options for those over 60 are limited, and that the holding pattern of shelter-street-shelter does not lead to permanent housing.

The second question, "Is this your first time experiencing homelessness," was split between 51 respondents saying "yes" and 49 participants saying "no."

The third question, "What factors have contributed to your current situation of homelessness?", allows a quantity of answers to be selected. Answers range from "Death of family/friend" to "eviction", "family conflict", "lack of affordable housing," "health challenges", "loss of employment/income," "loss of spouse or partner", "rising cost of healthcare," "substance use," "stayed in Vegas after visiting," and "other," where respondents are encouraged to answer to the best of their ability any other contributing factor to their current housing situation. 42 out of 100 participants indicated "loss of employment/income" as a contributing factor. 21 out of 100 mentioned eviction, 19 out of 100 mentioned lack of affordable housing, 15 out of 100 mentioned health challenges, 12 mentioned family conflict, and 18 mentioned loss or death of a loved one. Importantly, only 8 out of 100 participants mentioned substance use, and only 5 mentioned staying in Vegas after visiting. It is a frequent assumption and stigma that people experiencing homelessness are both people from out of town and people with substance use disorder. It is also important to recognize the stigma of these two realities and the influence they have on participants self-disclosing either reality to the survey taker.

The "other" category in this question is also illuminating. Gentrification, jail, house fires, domestic violence, lack of vital documents, and more are all self-selected reasons why participants have become homeless. In Las Vegas, 5 out of 100 mentioned gambling as a contributing factor to homelessness. While the survey does not differentiate between employment and other sources of



income (such as Disability or Social Security), we must recognize that Disability and Social Security are tremendously strenuous to obtain and retain, especially for those living without a home.

The fourth question is “How easy or difficult is it for you to access the services you need?” with a numbered range from 1 - 5, 1 being easy and 5 being difficult. Surprisingly, the answers here are mostly even across the range. 23 out of 98 individuals who answered this question answered that it is very easy, with 21 out of 98 individuals answering that it is very difficult.

Question number five is “What are the biggest barriers preventing you from accessing services?”, again with a list respondents can choose from and/or pick their own. 42 out of the 97 participants that answered this question mentioned transportation, with 36 mentioning long wait times. 25 out of 97 mentioned health challenges. 16 mentioned lack of information about available services. 17 participants mentioned costs or fees, 11 out of 97 marked negative past experiences, and 9 mentioned safety concerns.

Question six asks, “Are you able to access the healthcare you need?” with a substantial majority indicating that they are able to access healthcare. It is uncertain what this means to them. The survey did not ask if they regularly went to a Primary Care Provider, or if they just went to the ER if they were in pain. It seemed that many individuals experiencing homelessness over the age of 59 in this survey were healthy enough to withstand the elements. 31 out of 99 individuals who answered this question said that healthcare was difficult and inconsistent or inaccessible.

Question seven, “What types of healthcare services do you need but can't access?”, asks participants to choose from a list which includes “Dental care,” “Home care or personal support,” “long-term or chronic condition management,” “Medical coverage or assistance,” “Mental health support,” “Primary care,” “Sexual Health,” “Substance use treatment/detox,” “Vision,” and “wound care.” Responses to this question indicate significant unmet healthcare needs among seniors experiencing homelessness, with dental care emerging as the most frequently identified gap (18 mentions). Participants also commonly reported needing access to long-term or chronic condition management, home care or personal support, primary care, medical coverage or assistance, mental health services, vision care, and wound care. Several respondents also identified specialized medical needs, including access to cardiology, hematology, podiatry, ear, nose, and throat specialists, surgery, cancer treatment support, oxygen equipment, medications, dentures, and transportation to medical appointments. A small number described specific barriers, such as stolen medications, lack of insurance coverage for specialists, or inability to attend treatment due to caregiving and transportation challenges.

“What challenges do you face in finding stable housing?” has very telling answers. Like the previous question, there is a list that includes “Difficulty navigating housing systems,” “difficulty obtaining income supports or benefits,” “discrimination based on age, health, etc”, “health or mobility issues,” “lack of affordable housing options,” “lack of employment opportunities,” “lack of senior-specific housing options,” “no access to support programs or housing assistance,” “no place for my pets,” “safety concerns,” “waitlists for senior or supportive housing,” “wanting to live alone,” and “other.” Like all other questions in this survey with a list of options, participants are invited to check all that apply.



46 out of 99 participants cited lack of affordable housing, with another 3 that cited the same concerns in the “other” category. 36 mentioned difficulty obtaining income supports. 32 mentioned difficulty navigating housing systems. 27 cited health and mobility issues as challenges, and 19 participants checked off “waitlists for senior housing.” 19 participants also cited lack of senior-specific housing as a barrier. 6 participants mentioned legal issues or past criminal records.

Question 9, “What is your primary source of support during this time?” overwhelmingly indicates older adults rely on the formal social safety net, including social services (69 out of 98), community organizations (39 out of 98), and government assistance programs (49 out of 98), over the informal support of family and friends (22 out of 98). Like the previous questions, each answer is not exclusive. Participants are free to choose all of the above.

The last two questions are short answer. Question 10 asks “What kind of assistance or services do you believe would make the biggest difference in improving your quality of life?” Answers range from Housing (the majority of responses), to phones, therapy, medical care, vital documents, employment, and legal aid. The last question is “What changes in our community would help seniors feel more supported and secure?” Answers here range from better and more accurate information on resources for seniors, social groups for seniors, less police harassment, less gang violence, senior housing, safer streets, more affordable rent for seniors, transportation, specifically trained social workers for seniors, more police, less police, more outreach, a day shelter for seniors, and better understanding of homelessness overall.

Synopsis

This 11-question survey highlights many facts that those who work in homeless services already know. There is a severe lack of affordable housing options for those collecting SSDI and SSI. Section 8 vouchers are not enough. Many participants in this survey have been homeless for over one year, meaning that emergency shelter, basic survival programs, and Coordinated Entry leave gaps in transitioning people, especially our more vulnerable elder community members, from homelessness. Many participants in this survey highlight the need for clearer processes surrounding obtaining Social Security benefits, as well as the need to gain employment and work during their golden years. Also of note is that many participants are heavily reliant on formal social service programs rather than informal ones.