



# 44<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HOMELESS CENSUS

Mayor's Office of Housing

BOSTON - June 14, 2024 - On the night of January 31, Mayor Michelle Wu led a group of volunteers, including City and federal officials, homeless services providers, and public health and safety first responders, in conducting the City of Boston's 44th annual unsheltered count as part of Boston's [annual homeless census](#).

During the annual census, the City of Boston collects data on households who are spending the night unsheltered on the street or staying in emergency shelter, transitional housing, or domestic violence shelter programs. This point-in-time count is a national requirement for communities that receive [Continuum of Care](#) grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

## CITY OF BOSTON 2024 HOMELESS CENSUS SUMMARY DATA

Household Type	2023		2024		% Change	
	Individuals	Individuals	Individuals	Individuals	Individuals	Individuals
Street Count	169		134		-20.7%	
Emergency Shelter	1,343		1,544		15.0%	
Transitional Housing	256		297		16.0%	
Safe Haven	35		61		74.3%	
<b>Subtotal: Single Adults</b>	<b>1,803</b>		<b>2,036</b>		<b>12.9%</b>	
Families	Persons in Families	Number of Families	Persons in Families	Number of Families	Persons in Families	Number of Families
Emergency Shelter	3,395	1,129	3,670	1,125	8.1%	-0.4%
Transitional Housing	4	2	50	25	1150.0%	1150.0%
<b>Subtotal: Families</b>	<b>3,399</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>3,720</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,202</b>		<b>5,756</b>		<b>10.6%</b>	

## CITY OF BOSTON 2024 HOMELESS CENSUS SUBPOPULATION DATA

Subpopulation Type	2023	2024	% Change
Adult survivors of domestic violence	135	385	185.2%
Unaccompanied youth (up to age 24)	112	132	17.9%
Veterans	190	228	20.0%

All subpopulations are included in the “Homeless Census Summary Data” table above.

### KEY FINDINGS

After years of decreasing homelessness, Boston is seeing higher numbers of households experiencing homelessness, aligning with national trends and reflecting local challenges. The number of people experiencing homelessness in Boston has increased by 10.6 percent, from 5,202 people in 2023 to 5,756 in 2024. This is 11.3 percent lower than the high of 6,492 people experiencing homelessness in 2015.

Boston’s emergency shelters are serving an unprecedented inflow of migrant households in 2023 and 2024, requiring new statewide services and resources that include additional shelter capacity to meet increasing demand. The number of shelter beds available for adults in Boston decreased significantly during the pandemic, and has since increased beyond pre-pandemic levels.

In state fiscal year 2023, Massachusetts’ Office for Refugees and Immigrants reported 11,633 new arrivals – not all of whom are experiencing homelessness – compared to 4,359 in 2022 and 1,018 in 2021.<sup>1</sup> Boston’s family shelters are overseen by the state. About half of the families enrolled in the state’s emergency shelter system as of March 11 were migrant, refugee, or asylum-seeking families, according to reports provided by the state.<sup>2</sup> In individual shelters, migrants represent approximately 25 percent of guests in City shelters<sup>3</sup> and 48 percent of new guests at Pine Street Inn, the other major provider of emergency shelter for single adults in Boston. At Pine Street Inn, 61% of those new arrivals report that Haiti is their country of origin.<sup>4</sup> Boston’s rates of unsheltered homelessness are also

<sup>1</sup> The Boston Globe, [Everything you need to know about the influx of migrants to Mass.](#) (March 19, 2024)

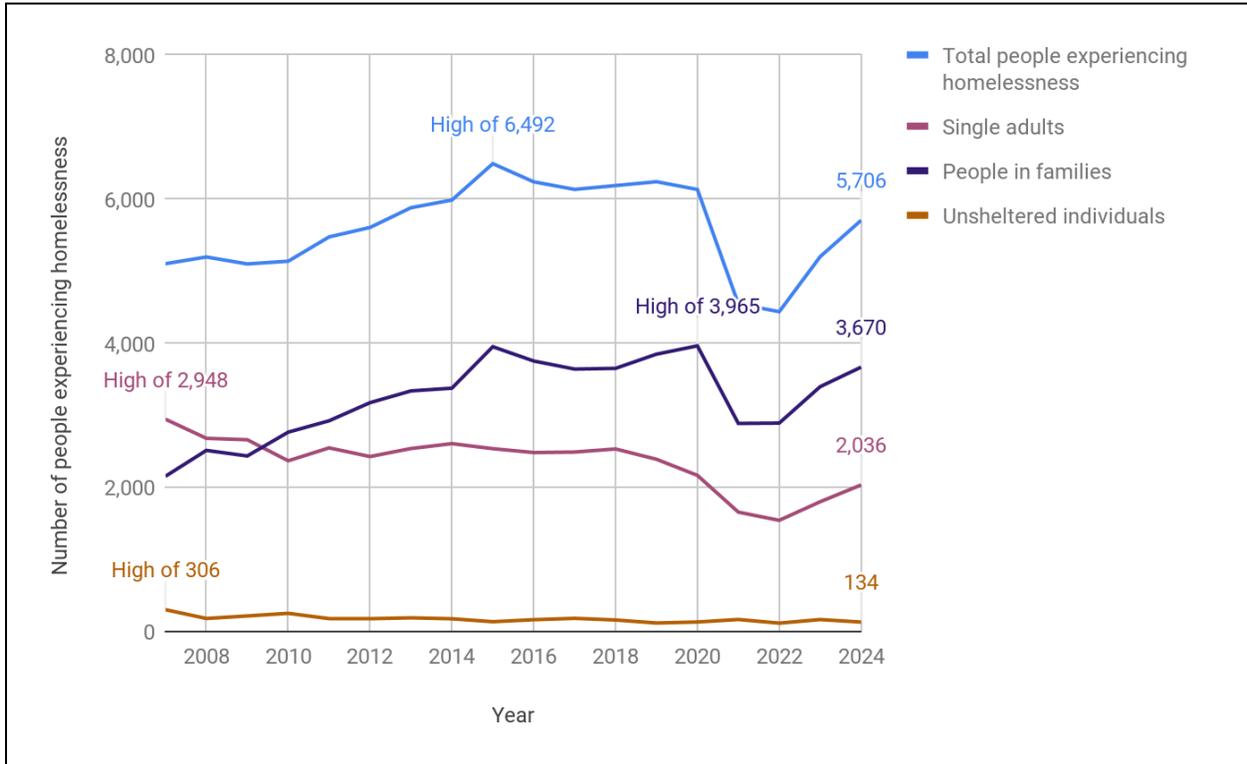
<sup>2</sup> The Boston Globe (March 19, 2024)

<sup>3</sup> Data provided by the Boston Public Health Commission representing current shelter capacity as of March 2024

<sup>4</sup> Data provided by Pine Street Inn for the 10 weeks prior to May 15, 2024

impacted by the arrival of migrant, refugee, or asylum-seeking households. On the night of the census, there were 30 unsheltered adults staying at Logan Airport, compared to 5 in 2023. Of those 30, 26 were identified as migrants.

**CITY OF BOSTON HOMELESS CENSUS DATA 2007-2024**



HUD reports that 2023 saw the highest nationwide number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night since HUD’s annual point-in-time count reporting began in 2007. Homelessness increased nationwide across all household types between 2022 and 2023, the most recent year for which HUD has published national data.<sup>5</sup> The number of people across the U.S experiencing homelessness increased by 12 percent between 2022 and 2023, with the largest increase in major cities.

Between 2007 – the year that HUD’s point-in-time count reporting began – and 2023 – the most recent data available – national counts of homelessness increased by only 0.9 percent, from 647,258 people in 2007 to 653,104 people in 2023. However, homelessness rose significantly in many states, with Oregon, Washington, Massachusetts, New York, and

<sup>5</sup> U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, [The 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress](#) (December 2023), used throughout as the source of all national and state-level data on the number of people experiencing homelessness

California reporting increases between 14.5 and 64.9 percent. Across Massachusetts, homelessness grew by 26.5 percent from 2007 to 2023, representing an additional 4,014 people experiencing homelessness on the night of the census in 2023 than in 2007. Between 2007 and 2024, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Boston has increased by 12.8 percent, less than half the increase seen statewide.

Boston continues to invest local resources and federal grants in preventing and ending homelessness for all households. In February, [the City received more than \\$47 million](#) from the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for new and ongoing programs that provide housing and services to households experiencing homelessness.

### **Adult Individuals**

- The number of adult individuals experiencing homelessness in Boston on the night of the census rose by 12.9 percent, from 1,803 people in 2023 to 2,036 people in 2024. This is in part a reflection of the significant influx of migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking households presenting in Massachusetts over the last several years. However, individual homelessness in Boston has decreased by 30.9 percent between 2007 and 2024, from 2,948 homeless individuals in 2007 to 2,036 homeless individuals in 2024. In addition to being a baseline year for reporting, 2007 was the year with the highest reported number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Boston.
- The number of individuals staying in emergency shelters on the night of the census increased by 15 percent, from 1,343 people in 2023 to 1,544 in 2024. This is 18.4 percent lower than the high of 1,892 individuals in emergency shelters in 2018.
- Nationally, individual homelessness rose by 10.8 percent between 2022 and 2023. The number of individuals experiencing homelessness in the U.S is the highest it has ever been since national data reporting began in 2007. HUD reported that in 2023 there were 13 percent more individuals experiencing homelessness than there were in 2007.

### **Unsheltered Individuals**

- The number of unsheltered individuals staying on the street on the night of the census decreased by 20.7 percent, or 35 individuals, from 169 individuals in 2023 to 134 in 2024.
- In 2024, 2.3 percent of people experiencing homelessness in Boston were unsheltered. While any person without shelter is one person too many, Boston

continues to have one of the lowest rates of unsheltered homelessness of any major city in the United States, as has been the case since federal reporting began in 2007.

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Boston CoC launched two housing first initiatives for persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness. A multiagency Street to Home Initiative (S2H) housed 300 unsheltered individuals from 6/1/21-10/31/23. In addition, city and community agencies stood up low-threshold sites to mitigate encampments at the intersection of Massachusetts Ave and Melnea Cass Blvd. The Mayor's Office of Housing worked with all sites to ensure that supportive housing pathways were offered to clients willing to work toward that goal. To date, 213 formerly unsheltered individuals have been housed from the six low-threshold sites since January 12, 2022.
- In 2023, the most recent year for which national data is available, 39.3 percent of people experiencing homelessness nationally were unsheltered. The number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness nationally increased by 9.7 percent from 2022 to 2023 and by 0.3 percent from 2007 to 2023. Unsheltered homelessness has decreased by 56.2 percent in Boston since 2007, from 306 individuals in 2007 to 134 in 2024.

### **Families**

- There were no unsheltered families on the streets of Boston on the night of the census, as has been true since federal reporting began in 2007. On the afternoon of January 31, prior to the homeless census, the state's Executive Office of Housing and Liveable Communities opened an additional shelter for migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking family households, relocating 75 unsheltered families from Boston. Had this not been the case, Boston would have reported unsheltered family households for the first time ever.
- The total number of homeless people in families increased by 9.4 percent, from 3,399 in 2023 to 3,720 in 2024. This is 6.2 percent lower than the high of 3,965 in 2020. The number of people in families in emergency shelters increased by 8.1 percent, from 3,395 people in 2023 to 3,670 in 2024. Statewide, approximately half of the families enrolled in the state's emergency shelter system were migrant, refugee, or asylum-seeking families, according to reports provided by the state in March.
- The number of people in families in transitional housing increased from 4 people in 2023 to 50 in 2024. The City and its partners successfully applied to HUD for funding to create two additional transitional housing programs for families experiencing domestic violence, which opened this past year. The programs provide

temporary housing to promote short-term stability and support families in quickly accessing and maintaining permanent housing.

- The increase in family homelessness is in line with statewide and national trends. HUD reports that between 2022 and 2023, family homelessness increased in 34 states and the District of Columbia. Massachusetts reported one of the largest increases, a statewide increase of 29 percent. HUD's 2023 report to Congress identified several contributing factors to the rise in family homelessness in Massachusetts, including Massachusetts' "right-to-shelter law," families priced out of affordable housing, migrant families arriving in Massachusetts, the easing of pandemic-era restrictions on shelter capacity, and opening additional shelters to meet the demand.
- The number of families newly experiencing homelessness in Boston over the course of a year has increased by 44.4 percent from federal fiscal year 2020 to 2023, and the number of people in families experiencing homelessness has increased by 43.5 percent. In federal fiscal year 2023, 820 Boston families were new to homelessness, compared to 568 in 2020.

### **Adult Survivors of Domestic Violence**

- The category of *Adult Survivors of Domestic Violence* reports on adults who are currently experiencing homelessness because they are fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The number of adult survivors of domestic violence experiencing homelessness increased by 185.2 percent, from 135 in 2023 to 385 in 2024.
- While this may reflect an actual increase in the number of adult survivors of domestic violence, it also reflects improved data collection practices around experiences of domestic violence, including training service provider staff at least annually on trauma-informed care and trauma-informed interviewing techniques.
- According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, between 22 and 57 percent of all homeless women report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness.<sup>6</sup> The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports that 33.9 percent of Massachusetts women and 31.7 percent of Massachusetts men experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner

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<sup>6</sup> National Network to End Domestic Violence (2019). [Domestic Violence, Housing, and Homelessness](#).

sexual violence and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes.<sup>7</sup>

- Over the last several years, Boston has successfully applied for additional resources from HUD to provide new housing and services to survivors of domestic violence, including immediate emergency housing and longer-term permanent housing and stabilization services. The City's award from HUD this year includes two new projects that will serve survivors.

### **Veterans**

- The number of veterans experiencing homelessness increased by 38 people, from 190 in 2023 to 228 in 2024, a 20 percent increase. Nationally, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness increased by 7 percent between 2022 and 2023.
- No veterans were unsheltered in Boston on the night of the census.
- Boston has reduced veteran homelessness by 46.5 percent since 2011, which is the first year veterans were reported separately in the annual homeless census dataset published by HUD. There were 426 veterans experiencing homelessness in Boston on the night of the 2011 census. This progress is the result of years of strategies, partnerships, and resources dedicated to ending veteran homelessness.

### **Unaccompanied Youth**

- The number of unaccompanied youth (up to age 24) experiencing homelessness increased by 20 people, from 112 in 2023 to 132 in 2024, a 17.9 percent increase.
- HUD and its federal partners consider 2017 the baseline year for measuring youth homelessness in the U.S. The number of unaccompanied homeless youth in Boston has decreased by 5 percent between 2017 and 2024, from 139 in 2017 to 132 on the night of the 2024 census.
- Nationally, the number of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness increased by 15 percent between 2022 and 2023, with major cities reporting the largest increase (22 percent). Increases in unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness were reported in 39 states and the District of Columbia between 2022 and 2023. Between 2017 and 2023, unaccompanied youth homelessness across the country declined by 9 percent.

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<sup>7</sup> National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2020). [Domestic violence in Massachusetts.](#)