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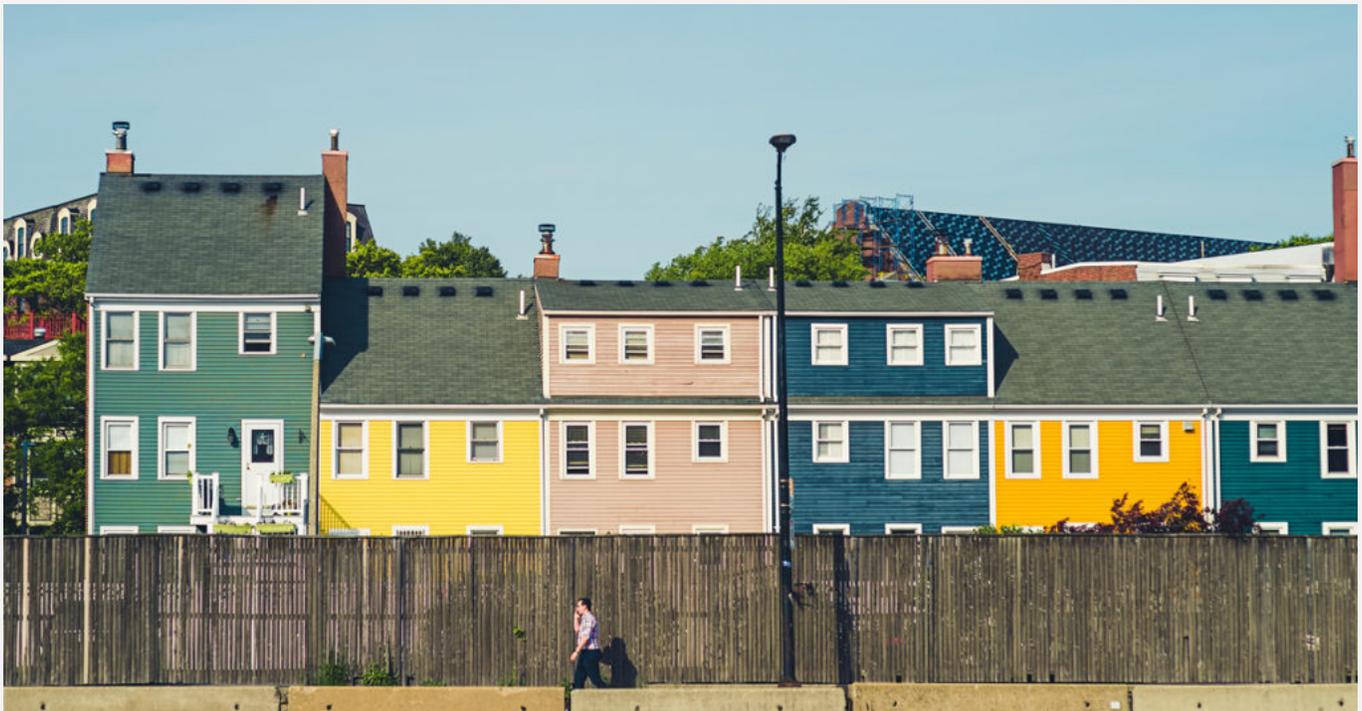
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# State of Homelessness: A Look at Race and Ethnicity



Written by Joy Moses | May 27, 2020

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Race, ethnicity, and homelessness are thoroughly intertwined. This conclusion has been leaping out of data reported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in recent years, and analyzed in the Alliance's annual [State of Homelessness](#) report. Perhaps most notably, people of color are more likely to experience homelessness. But recent data reflects the systemic nature of racial disparities in people experiencing homelessness. The 2020 Edition of the State of Homelessness includes some notable new features to help illustrate these disparities.

The Alliance calculated the national-level rates of homelessness for each racial and ethnic group; these numbers put homeless counts in the context of overall population numbers. The population of Pacific Islanders (160 people homeless out of every 10,000) and Native Americans (67 people homeless out of every 10,000) experiencing homelessness are concerning—these groups that have the highest national-level rates of homelessness. As relatively small parts of the general population, they are harder for HUD and the Census to count accurately. Despite these challenges, such numbers raise giant flags, pointing to communities that require more considerable attention to reduce disparities.

Extensively expanded state and local pages in the [State of Homelessness: 2020 Edition](#) further add to the report's racial and ethnic analysis. The map at the top of the report links to this information, which includes 1) state-level rates of homelessness for each group and 2) state- and CoC-level homeless counts for each group.

Such information allows readers to see that a state like California has a majority white homeless population, but people of color experience some of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation. For example, nationally, 55 Black people experience homelessness out of every 10,000—but in California, that number is 194 out of every 10,000.

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The Alliance's Homelessness Research Institute plans to continue building upon the racial and ethnic analysis in the State of Homelessness. There is room to explore the data stories of each racial and ethnic group more thoroughly. Preliminarily, the Alliance has noted the following quick facts about each group:

- **Native Americans:** Unsheltered homelessness is elevated among Native American individuals. Fifty-six percent are sleeping in locations not meant for human habitation. This number is much higher than what exists for groups like Black people (25 percent) and homeless individuals overall (37 percent).
- **Black People:** Families play a significant role within black homelessness. Forty percent of black people experiencing homelessness are a part of families with children. Families have much smaller representation within groups like White people (22 percent) and American Indians (20 percent). If the representation of families within black homelessness resembled these other groups, the black rate of homelessness would drop from 55 to 42 people per 10,000.
- **Hispanics/Latinxs:** Relative to other groups, Hispanics/Latinxs have low rates of homelessness. However, since 2016, unsheltered homelessness among individuals in the group has grown by 50 percent. This number far surpasses most other subgroups, and the 25 percent increase in overall unsheltered homelessness increase over the same period.
- **Asians:** Most Asian homelessness (76 percent) is found in five states and a territory—California, New York, Hawaii, Washington, Texas, and the Northern Mariana Islands.
- **Pacific Islanders:** Pacific Islander numbers exceed others in many of the above areas. As previously noted, it is the racial/ethnic group with the highest national-level rate of homelessness. Pacific Islanders are the

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the only group that has a higher representation of families (45 percent) than Black people.

Such data plays a significant role in the conversation, highlighting areas of concern that should be addressed through policy and practice. Ultimately, they help refine efforts to reduce and end homelessness while promoting greater equality.

Download the [Homelessness by the Numbers: Race](#) infographic.



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# National Alliance to END HOMELESSNESS

National Alliance to End Homelessness

1518 K Street NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20005 [Privacy Policy](#)

T: 202.638.1526 | F: 202.638.4664

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## [How to Get Help If You Are Experiencing Homelessness](#)

The National Alliance to End Homelessness does not provide direct services such as housing or case management. If you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, please [contact your local 2-1-1 hotline](#) or learn about other resources on our [How to Get Help page](#).

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