FY2020 Data Snapshot

Office of
Homeless Services
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

City of Philadelphia
Office of Homeless Services

Introduction

The mission of the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) is to make homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring in Philadelphia. We fulfill this mission by providing the leadership, planning, coordination and mobilization of resources to an extensive system of homelessness prevention, emergency, temporary and long-term housing services to those facing imminent or literal homelessness.

The City's strategic plan to address homelessness, The Roadmap to Homes, identifies core values for the homeless service system as determined by the community of stakeholders who developed the plan. Being data informed and transparent are among these, as are flexibility and efficiency. This 2020 Data Snapshot produced by the Office of Homeless Services is a foundational element of fulfilling these values. Quite simply, it is only with high quality, consistent data that we can identify trends, assess progress and direct our efforts to best meet the needs of the community.

To that end, the Office of Homeless Services has worked tirelessly to address data quality concerns, encourage agencies to use Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and provide training and technical assistance to users, in order to ensure that the data collected is comprehensive and accurately reflects the community. The FY18 Data Snapshot was the first report produced with data from HMIS by the Office of Homeless Services that contained a system-wide overview of the City's progress towards ending homelessness. This report is the third comprehensive data report released by the Office of Homeless Services, and it aims to expand upon the data that was provided in the first two Data Snapshots, and to illustrate the community's progress towards ending homelessness.

Note: At the time of this report, 84% of the beds dedicated to people experiencing homeless by various agencies in the City of Philadelphia were reporting into HMIS. Agencies providing shelter for Survivors of Domestic Violence, and agencies that do not use Philadelphia's HMIS are only included in the Point-in-Time and Housing Inventory Count sections. The remainder of this snapshot reflects data from the 84% of beds reported in HMIS and is therefore not representative of the entire homeless assistance system.

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Making Homelessness Rare, Brief and Non-recurring

The Office of Homeless Services tracks its progress towards ending homeless by measuring the number of people entering the homeless system for the first time (rare), the length of time someone experiences homelessness (brief), and the number of people who return to homelessness after exiting the system (non-recurring). These measures are described in Roadmap to Homes, Philadelphia's Five Year Strategic Plan for the Homeless Assistance System, and align with the national goals for addressing homelessness established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

GOAL: MAKE HOMELESSNESS RARE
METRIC: NUMBER OF PERSONS ENTERING AN EMERGENCY SHELTER, SAFE HAVEN, TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OR PERMANENT HOUSING FOR THE FIRST TIME

FY19	FY20
72% 9,083 (72%) of the 12,651 persons who entered a project in FY19 were entering a housing assistance project for the first time	**68%** 9,313 (68%) of the 13,632 persons who entered a project in FY20 were entering a housing assistance project for the first time

The Office of Homeless Services' goal to make homelessness rare starts with aiding households at-risk of experiencing homelessness by emphasizing prevention and diversion strategies and building partnerships with a diverse array of organizations in order to effectively allocate resources. Through prevention and diversion, the Office of Homeless Services can help households maintain their current housing or identify and create new pathways to housing, while connecting households to services and supports that provide direct assistance. Aligning these efforts helps at-risk households attain housing stability while preserving scarce housing resources.

In an effort to strengthen prevention and diversion practices, Office of Homeless Services (OHS) increased its support for prevention and diversion assistance. As a result, **over 1,400 households received prevention or diversion assistance in FY20**. Between FY19 and FY20, OHS reported a decrease in the number of persons experiencing homelessness for the first time in four years (since 2017).

GOAL: MAKE HOMELESSNESS BRIEF
METRIC: AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIME (DAYS) IN AN EMERGENCY SHELTER, SAFE HAVEN OR TRANSITIONAL PROJECT FOR ALL PERSONS

FY19	FY20
161 days Average length of time participants are enrolled in an emergency shelter, safe haven or transitional housing (median length of stay = 68 days)	**157 days** Average length of time participants are enrolled in an emergency shelter, safe haven or transitional housing (median length of stay = 68 days)

ES	TH	SH	RRH	PSH
65 days	330 days	215 days	274 days	1,990 days

The average length of stay in emergency shelter, safe haven and transitional housing projects indicates the homeless system's ability to move people out of homelessness. It can also measure the system's ability to embrace the Housing First Approach, which strives to move people into housing as quickly as possible by removing barriers for households entering housing assistance projects. In FY20, in order to more closely reflect participants' experience, the methodology for calculating this metric changed to include night-by-night and after-hours participants. The Average and median length of stay for FY19 were also adjusted to reflect the new methodology.

GOAL: MAKE HOMELESSNESS NON-RECURRING
METRIC: NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO EXITED TO PERMANENT HOUSING DESTINATION IN THE PAST TWO YEARS AND RETURNED TO HOMELESSNESS

FY19	FY20
85%	**82%**
of participants who exited a project for a permanent housing destination did not return to homelessness	of participants who exited a project for a permanent housing destination did not return to homelessness

To track the community's progress towards making homeless non-recurring, the Office of Homeless Services tracks the number of persons who exited to a permanent housing destination and then re-entered a housing assistance project. This measure provides the percent of people who stably and successfully exited homelessness.

Similarly to the previous measure, this one was also impacted by the expansion of emergency shelter projects in Philadelphia's HMIS, and the 82% reported for FY20 reflects a more accurate representation of this measure. Moving forward, the Office of Homeless Services continues to advocate for more permanent housing resources.

Additional Performance Measures

The Office of Homeless Services tracks additional performance measures that relate to and support the community's mission of making homelessness brief, rare and non-recurring. For example, employment and income growth is closely related to a household's ability to remain stably housed and is therefore tracked in order to better understand the community's progress towards making homeless non-recurring. The chart below reviews the income reported during a person's exit compared to the income they reported during their enrollment. Between FY19 and FY20, there was a 3% decrease in the percent of persons receiving earned and non-employment income who exited from a project funded by the Continuum of Care program. The observed decrease was significant in the 4th Quarter of FY20 and may reflect the COVID-19 economic impact.

INCOME CHANGE: ADULTS WHO EXITED*

	FY19	FY20
Number of adults who exited a project (leavers)	1,155	699
Leavers with increased earned income	285 (25%)	115 (17%)
Leavers with increased non-employment cash income	328 (28%)	208 (31%)
Total leavers with any increase in income (earned + non-employment income)	542 (47%)	295 (44%)

*This chart reports on data collected from projects that were funding by the Continuum of Care program only. More information on the Continuum of Care can be found at http://philadelphiaofficeofhomelessservices.org/about-us/continuum-of-care/

One of the key indicators of success for housing projects is the percent of exits to a permanent housing destination. Examples of permanent housing destinations include moving into a rental unit, moving in with friends or family, or entering a permanent housing project. In FY20, 26% of all persons who were enrolled in an Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, Transitional Housing or Rapid Rehousing projects exited to a permanent housing destination. The number is greater, but the percentage of successful exits remained the same as in FY19. This is directly related to the availability of affordable housing.

EXITS TO PERMANENT HOUSING

	FY19	FY20
Persons in Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, Transitional Housing and Rapid Rehousing	9,193	10,308
Of those, who exited to a permanent housing destination	2,417	2,650
Successful Exits	26%	26%

Housing Inventory Count

The HIC (Housing Inventory Count) is a complete inventory of the emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent housing beds available in Philadelphia during the January Point-in-Time Count. It identifies the community's capacity to serve persons experiencing homelessness, and it can be used to detect the need for the additional projects for populations that are under-served.

In Philadelphia's homeless assistance system, 33% of the total beds are for temporary shelter (emergency shelter); 2% are dedicated for Safe Haven; 20% are for projects with longer stays that are intended to lead to independent living (transitional and rapid re-housing); and 44% of beds are dedicated to providing permanent housing for households with someone who has a disability.

Percent of Total Beds by Project Type 2020
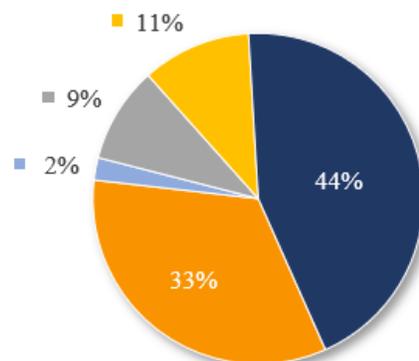
- 11%
- 9%
- 2%
- 44%
- 33%

■ Emergency Shelter ■ Safe Haven ■ Transitional Housing ■ Rapid Re-housing ■ Permanent Supportive

2018-2020 HOUSING INVENTORY COUNT: BEDS AVAILABLE YEAR-ROUND

	2018	2019	2020
Emergency Shelter	3,465	3,725	3,878
Safe Haven	255	254	254
Transitional Housing	1,244	1,129	1,090
Rapid Re-housing	1,176	1,111	1,236
Permanent Supportive Housing	4,940	5,158	5,131

2018-2020 HOUSING INVENTORY COUNT: BEDS AVAILABLE BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

	2018	2019	2020
Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven and Transitional Housing			
Beds for Adult Only Households	2,570	2,881	3,006
Beds for Households with Children & Adults	2,353	2,208	2,193
Beds for Households with Children Only	41	19	23
Permanent Supportive Housing			
Beds for Adult Only Households	2,584	2,998	2,940

Beds for Households with Children & Adults	2,356	2,160	2,191

Point-in-Time Count

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is an annual count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. It provides the homeless assistance community with data needed to understand the number and characteristics of persons who are experiencing homelessness.

▶ **Unsheltered population** includes persons sleeping in any location not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans, such as on the streets, transportation centers, public parks, abandoned buildings or cars.[i]

▶ **Sheltered population** includes persons experiencing homelessness that are staying in an emergency shelter, safe haven or transitional housing project.

2020 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Total Persons	4,676	958	5,634
Total Children (Under 18)	1,158	11	1,169
Total Youth (Ages 18 to 24)	321	106	427
Total Adults (Over 24)	3,197	841	4,038

Between 2016 and 2020 the total number of unsheltered persons counted during the Point-in-Time Count has seen an 8% average increase. However, over the last two years there was a 6% decline in the unsheltered population. The total number of sheltered declined over the last 5 years. Overall, in FY20, both sheltered and unsheltered populations saw 2% decline.

2020 PIT COUNT: UNSHELTERED INDIVIDUALS SURVEYED IN CENTER CITY

For this year, the PIT Count was held on the night of Wednesday, January 22nd from midnight to 4:00 am. The map to the right shows the location of unsheltered persons who were sleeping on the streets, or in either Suburban Station or 30th Street Station, and completed a survey conducted by volunteers. In the Center City area, defined here as south of Spring Garden, north of South Street, and bordered by the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, there were a total of 388 individuals counted.
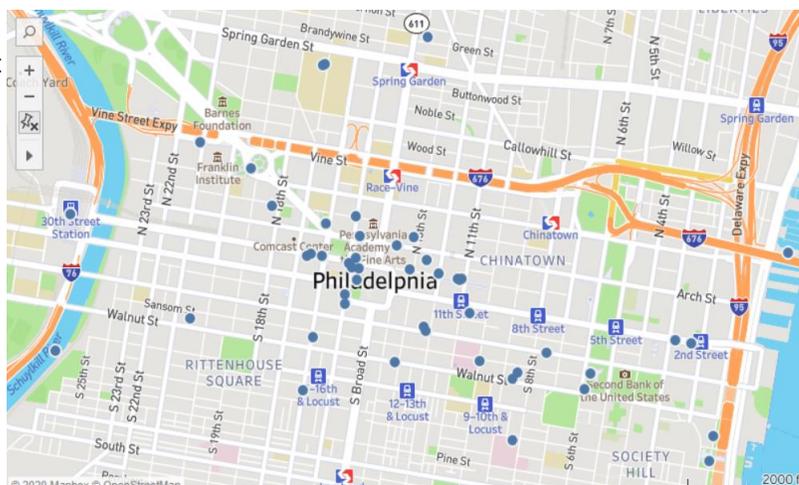
Since 2016, the total number of persons experiencing homelessness has decreased by 8% (-478 people). This reduction is primarily due to a decrease in the number of persons in shelter. The number of unsheltered persons increased from 2016 to 2018 and slightly decreased since 2018.

2016-2020 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT TRENDS
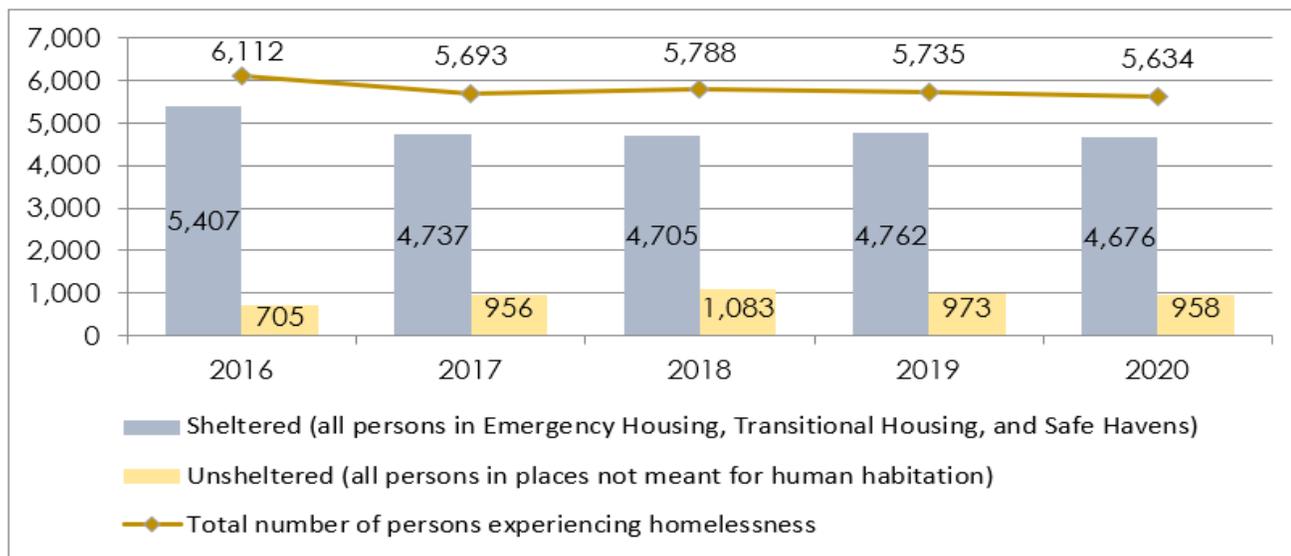
For households with at least one child and one adult, the sheltered count has decreased by 26% (213 households) since 2017, and from 2018 to 2020, the unsheltered count remained at zero. The number of households without children saw a slight decrease of 2% (45 households) in 2020 an improvement from the steady increase from 2018 to 2019 and the sheltered fluctuated from 2017 to 2020.

HOUSEHOLDS REPORTED 2017-2020 POINT-IN-TIME COUNTS

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sheltered Households	3,199	3,237	3,426	3,335
Households without children	2,352	2,474	2,754	2,709
Households with adults and children	825	744	663	612
Households with only children	22	19	9	14
Unsheltered Households	943	1,083	973	958
Households without children	938	1,066	967	947
Households with adults and children	1	0	0	0
Households with only children	4	17	6	11
Total Households	4,142	4,320	4,399	4,293

To be considered chronically homeless, a person must have a disabling condition and their homeless experience must be at least one year long; or during the last three years they must have at least four occasions of homelessness that equal

one year in length. In the 2020 PIT Count, the total number of chronically homeless persons decreased by 12% as compared to 2019 PIT Count. The largest decrease was among the unsheltered population due to deployment of additional resources including new Recovery House programs, additional OHS shelter programs such as Sacred Heart and Ife, and additional winter beds that became available in December 2019 as well as increased dedicated supportive housing.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT: CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

	Emergency Shelter	Safe Haven	Unsheltered	Total	% Change from previous year (2019)
Chronically Homeless Individuals	670	188	287	1,145	-12% ←

Several population subgroups are considered by HUD to be more vulnerable. This includes persons who are chronically homeless, unaccompanied youth (18 to 24 years old), and veterans. Of the subpopulations identified in the table below, persons experiencing a severe mental illness and chronic substance abuse are the most represented. Both of these populations' percentage of the adult population saw a slight decrease from last year's Point-in-Time Count. During the 2019 Count, 40.6% (1,808 out of 4,449 total adults) of all adults reported a mental illness, and in 2020, it decreased to 39.6%. For substance use disorder, the percentage decreased from 37.5% (1,667 out of 4,334) in 2019 to 33.3% in 2020.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT: SUBPOPULATIONS

	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total	% of Adult Population (4,465 adults)
Unaccompanied Youth (18-24)	161	106	267	6.0%
Parenting Youth (18-24)	72	0	72	1.6%
Veterans	219	21	240	5.4%
Mental Illness	1,249	518	1,767	39.6%
Substance Use Disorder	1,011	477	1,488	33.3%
Persons with HIV/AIDS	109	41	150	3.4%
Adults fleeing domestic violence	281	92	373	8.4%

Total Persons Served

The Office of Homeless Services records and tracks the number of persons served after each fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th). The tables in this section are based on the total number of persons who enrolled in each project type. Persons with enrollments in multiple project types are reported once for each project type. In FY20, there were a total of 19,988 unique persons served in all project types.
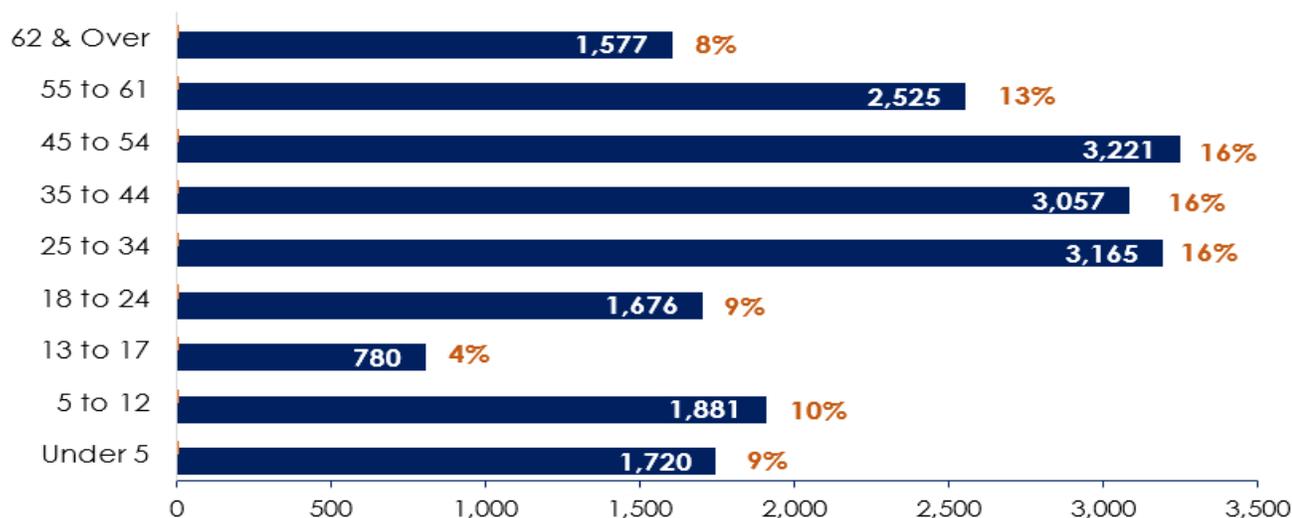
A TOTAL OF
19,988
PERSONS
WERE SERVED
IN FY20

TOTAL PERSONS SERVED BY PROJECT TYPE, FY19-20

	Overflow (After Hours & Winter Initiative)	Emergency Shelter	Safe Haven	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Permanent Supportive
FY20	5,445	8,206	703	1,287	2,608	4,059
FY19	3,811	8,347	561	1,385	2,198	3,653

*Persons are reported in each project type that they enrolled in. Persons with multiple enrollments are counted in each project type.

The average age of all persons served in project in FY20 was 35 years, which is higher than the average reported for previous years (33 in 2019; 31 in 2018; 29 in 2017). Between FY19 and FY20, the % of total number of children (ages 0 to 17) remained the same, and the % of total youth (18-24) saw a 1% increase. All of the age groups that captured people 25 and older increased, which is consistent with national trends.

AGE OF ALL PERSONS SERVED IN FY20

Age Group	Number	Percent
62 & Over	1,577	8%
55 to 61	2,525	13%
45 to 54	3,221	16%
35 to 44	3,057	16%
25 to 34	3,165	16%
18 to 24	1,676	9%
13 to 17	780	4%
5 to 12	1,881	10%
Under 5	1,720	9%

*Total of 386 persons (2%) missing Date of Birth information.

The percent of adults aged 55+ in shelter is anticipated to continue to grow significantly as the Baby Boomer generation and Generation X age. Studies show that older individuals experiencing homelessness age prematurely, with rates of cognitive decline and decreased mobility equal to persons 20 years older.[ii] This suggests that with the increase of older

individuals, the homeless assistance community should anticipate an increase in costs associated with health care services when serving this population. We need to expand housing solutions and create models with health care services and health care dollars that serve both the housing and health needs of people experiencing homelessness. The Office of Homeless Services hopes to expand such services over the next several years, as noted in the Roadmap to Homes plan.

HOUSEHOLDS SERVED IN FY20

	Families	Adults Only	Child Only	Total Households
Total Households	2,247	12,940	103	16,930
Total Persons in Households	6,726	13,110	152	19,988

Note: For the purposes of this report, Families are households with at least one Adult and one Child (less than 18 years old). In Adult Only households, all members are over 18 years old, and Child Only households are those where all members are under 18 years of age.

Identifying the type of households served in crisis housing can be challenging, as family structures are able to change for various reasons, such as children aging or individuals leaving a household. The total households reported above are based on the most recent enrollment reported. A total of 6,726 persons in a household with at least one adult and child were served in FY20, with an average household size of 3 people.

GENDER OF ALL PERSONS SERVED IN FY20

132; 1%
8,187; 41%
11,603; 58%
- Male
- Female
- Transgender or gender non-conforming
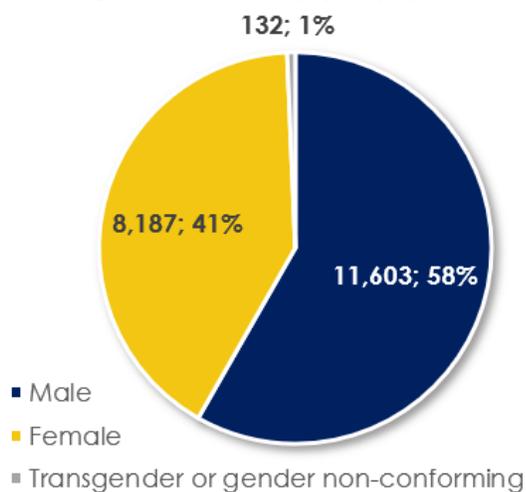
In the City of Philadelphia, 58% of persons experiencing homeless were male, 41% were female, and the remaining 1% were transgender or gender non-conforming. A closer review suggests an even wider gender split. Adding the household type shows that for individuals (households with adults only), 69% were male and 30% female. The difference between the percent of male and females widens even further when looking at the number of individuals who were unsheltered during the 2020 Point-in-Time Count, with 76% male (724), 22% female (216) and 1% transgender (10). Studies have shown that men are more likely to stay in unsheltered situations and experience longer durations of homelessness than women and transgender individuals.[iii, iv,v]

*66 persons missing gender information excluded

Transgender individuals are reported to experience more frequent episodes of homelessness, and on average are significantly younger than other gender cohorts.[vi, vii] This is seen in individuals served in Philadelphia during FY20, where the average age for adult females was 39, for adult males 46, and for transgender & gender non-conforming 36 was the average age.

For the past three decades, studies have shown that African American people are overrepresented in the in the U.S. homeless population.[viii] Reviewing the cumulated results from last year's Point-in-Time counts shows that nationally, four in ten people experiencing homelessness were African American, whereas in the general population, African Americans represent one in ten.[ixx] This trend is also evident in Philadelphia, where African American people represent 78% of the persons served in housing crisis and assistance programs in FY20, but only 44% of the city's general population.[xi]

RACE & ETHNICITY OF ALL PERSONS FY20
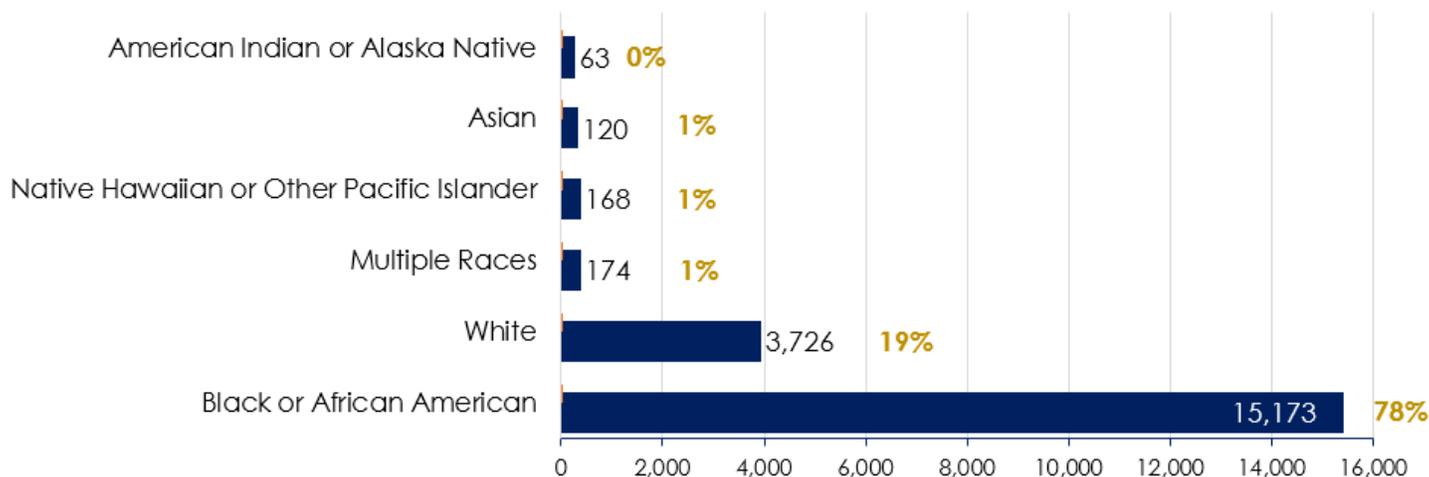
*Excludes the 564 (3%) persons with Client Refused, Client Doesn't Know, Data Not Collected selected for Race.

As previously mentioned, one of the key indicators of success for housing projects is the percent of exits to a permanent housing destination. A review of exits by race shows that those who identify as Black or African American and Multiple races had a higher successful exit rate, 27% and 29% respectfully, than the overall system (26%). Other groups, such as those who identified as White, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, and American Indian or Alaska Native had lower percent of exits to permanent destination as compared to the system.

Exit Destination	Black or African American	White	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Multiple Races	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native
Temporary Destination	1,228	333	14	15	3	6
Permanent Destination	2,146	390	14	24	3	6
Institutional Settings	80	55	3	3		1
Other Destinations	4,625	1,135	79	41	53	24
Successful Exits	27%	20%	13%	29%	5%	16%
Total	8,079	1,913	110	83	59	37

*Excludes the 372 persons with Client Refused, Client Doesn't Know, Data Not Collected selected for Race.

Additionally, the share of the U.S. population identifying as Hispanic, 18%, also has a slightly higher representation with this population, representing 22% of persons experiencing homelessness.[xii] In Philadelphia, 14% of the general population identified as Hispanic/Latinx, but in the housing assistance programs, this group only represented 9% of the population served.[xiii] A recent study of the 'Latinx paradox' (low representation of Latinxs among homeless population) in Philadelphia suggests that this may be due partly to systemic barriers (ex. language access), negative perceptions of homeless services, and informal and formal community assets that exist within the Latinx community which prevent some from becoming homeless.[xiv] People who are Latinx/Hispanic are also less likely to use standard homeless sleeping arrangements (shelters, churches, etc.) and more likely to be in crowded, inadequate housing or "doubling up." [xv] This may consequentially, exclude them from accessing homeless assistance programs, which focus on serving persons who are homeless according to the definition provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
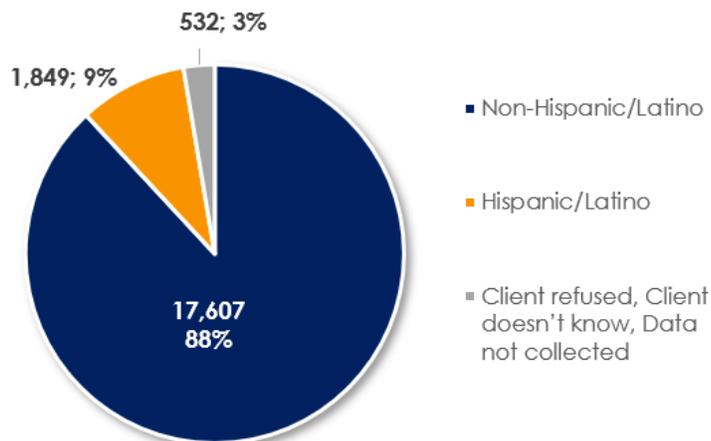
The Office of Homeless Services has worked to mitigate against the Latinx Paradox in several ways over the past three years: 1) providing a suite of homelessness prevention services that do not require people to meet the definition of literally homeless to get rental assistance; 2) providing more culturally competent Spanish language services in community organizations that already serve the Latinx community; 3) nesting the range of homeless assessment, referral and emergency housing services within housing counseling agencies in the Latinx community; 4) expanding the network of homeless services providers in the Latinx community to build capacity and increase availability; 5) support innovative practices, programs and policies designed to meet the unique needs of this population.

Pie chart legend:
- Non-Hispanic/Latino — 17,607; 88%
- Hispanic/Latino — 1,849; 9%
- Client refused, Client doesn't know, Data not collected — 532; 3%

Key Terms

- **Adult**: Persons age 18 and older.
- **After Hours**: An emergency shelter project that provides beds on a night-by-night basis to persons entering emergency shelter after 5:00 pm on weekdays, on weekends or holidays. After Hours beds are also referred to as Overflow beds.
- **Child**: Persons age 17 and younger.
- **Chronically Homeless**: A person experiencing homelessness (in a place not meant for human habitation, safe haven, or an emergency shelter) continuously for at least 1 year, or on at least four separate occasions in last 3 years where the combined length of time is those occasions is at least 12 months; and the person has a disability.
- **Disability**: an individual with a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder or brain injury. The condition must be:
    - Expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration
    - Impedes the individual's ability to live independently; and
    - Could be improved with suitable housing conditions.
- **Emergency Shelter**: Any facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for persons experiencing homelessness.
- **Household**: One or more individuals who live together.
- **Housing Inventory Count**: also known as the HIC, this chart is a complete inventory of all Emergency, Transitional, Safe Haven, Permanent Supportive, and Rapid Re-housing projects within the Philadelphia Continuum of Care.
- **Parenting Youth**: Youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who identifies as the parent or guardian of one or more children who are present or sleeping in the same place as that youth parent.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing**: Long-term housing project that provides supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability to live independently.
- **Point-in-Time Count**: Also known as the PIT, this is an annual count of all persons experiencing homelessness, sheltered or unsheltered, on a given night in January.
- **Rapid Re-Housing**: A project that provides rental assistance and supportive services on a time-limited basis to homeless families and individuals.
- **Transitional Housing**: Used to facilitate the movement of homeless families and individuals into permanent housing, this project type provides supportive services and housing for up to 24 months.
- **Unaccompanied Youth**: Persons under the age of 25 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- **Winter Initiative**: An emergency shelter project that provides supplemental beds on a planned basis during the winter. Winter Initiative beds are also referred to as Seasonal or Code Blue beds.
- **Youth**: Unaccompanied youth are persons under age 25 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as his/her child or children. Unaccompanied youth are single youth, youth couples, and groups of youth presenting together as a household.

Sources

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[xi] U.S. Census Bureau (2017 population estimated); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

[xii] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2018). The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. 12.

[xiii] U.S. Census Bureau (2017 population estimated); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

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