

THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

2025
EDITION

**NH Coalition
to End Homelessness**

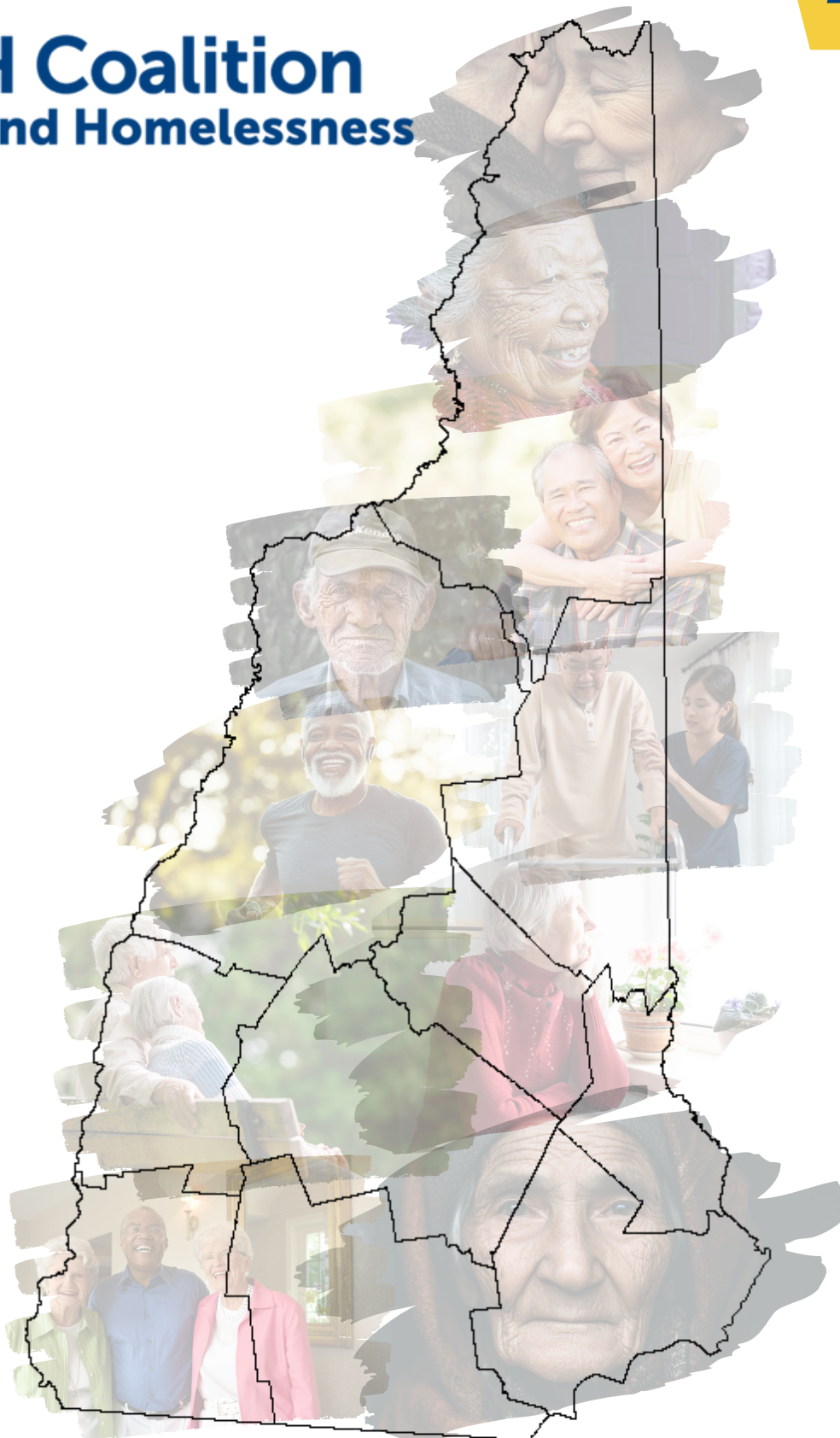


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NEW HAMPSHIRE COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

Working to advance effective solutions to prevent and end homelessness through research, education and advocacy.

“Recovery is not only about housing; it is about re-entry from another state of being. You cannot simply place a person back into society and expect the switch to flip again. Something deeper has to happen - a reawakening of trust, safety, and belonging.

Homelessness does not just strip away comfort; it rewrites the body’s script for survival. To help someone return, we must understand that they are not merely cold or hungry - they are living by a different code. To rebuild a home, we must first help them remember what home feels like inside the mind.”

-Miles Whitener, Granite Leaders Alumni and Homeless Advocate



UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS DATA AND SYSTEMS

The State of Homelessness in NH report relies primarily on two sources of data - the **Point-in-Time (PIT) Count** and **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** :

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count:

Each year during a 24-hour period at the end of January, NH and other states around the country conduct the annual PIT Count in an effort to document the number of individuals who are experiencing homelessness (both sheltered and unsheltered), as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The PIT Count provides a snapshot in time – just one night out of 365. The PIT Count is often considered an undercount, in part because holding it in January minimizes the number of people who are staying outside. People may be able to find someone to take them in during freezing temperatures who would not in warmer weather; others may make risky choices that allow them to secure temporary housing during the colder months that they would not otherwise make.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):

The HMIS system is a database used to collect information about individuals and families who receive services in response to their experience of, or risk of experiencing, homelessness. HMIS numbers represent a full calendar year of information about NH residents who received services for homelessness, rather than a 24-hour period of time.

Of note, not all organizations that provide services to people experiencing homelessness are required to enter client data into HMIS. Individuals experiencing homelessness that are served by organizations that do not enter information into HMIS are not reflected in HMIS data reporting, unless they are connected with a different agency that participates in HMIS.

HUD's Definition of Homelessness: Who Is Counted?

Both the PIT Count and HMIS year-long data count only those people who meet the HUD definition of homelessness, the most restrictive federal definition of the term. This definition includes people staying in a public or private place not meant for human habitation, such as a tent, a car, a condemned building, or somewhere outside. It also includes people who are staying in a program (either publicly or privately operated) that provides temporary shelter or housing for individuals, such as an emergency shelter, a transitional housing program, or a hotel or motel room paid for by a charitable organization or government entity, such as a local welfare department. People who have been housed in an institutional setting for less than 90 days who were staying in an emergency shelter or who were unsheltered before entering the institution also meet HUD's definition of homelessness. HUD also considers individuals or families who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence—and who do not have the resources to secure other housing—to be homeless.

It is important to note that HUD's definition of homelessness does not include people who are couch-surfing or doubled-up, staying temporarily with family or friends with no legal claim to be able to remain in that housing situation (such as a lease). Such unstably housed individuals are considered homeless by other federal agencies, such as the Department of Education and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), but are not represented in the PIT Count and HMIS numbers.

People who are housed in HUD-funded permanent housing programs are also not counted as homeless, though they met HUD's homeless definition when they entered the program, and their housing may be attached to an agency that provides additional homeless services. This is due to the fact that their housing within the program is not temporary; as indicated by their name, permanent housing programs are designed to be a long-term solution, and participants can remain housed in their units indefinitely.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

NH residents experiencing unsheltered and chronic homelessness are the most vulnerable of NH's homeless population.

Individuals in these circumstances face the greatest barriers to stability, including complex medical and behavioral health challenges that require intensive, coordinated, long-term support to exit homelessness and maintain housing.

Unsheltered homelessness has increased sharply over the past five years.

Between 2019 and 2024, the PIT Count for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness nearly quadrupled. The increase is a result of persistent housing constraints limiting exits from homelessness as well as the development of a more efficient system to obtain accurate counts.

Housing affordability remains the primary structural driver of homelessness.

Rising rents, low vacancy rates, and incomes that have not kept pace with housing costs continue to increase and prolong homelessness and constrain statewide progress.

To afford the cost of a median priced two-bedroom apartment at \$1,833 per month, a family would have to earn \$73,300 per year – almost \$15,000 per year more than the median renter household income. An annual income of \$73,300 equates to working full time at \$35.24 an hour.

Older adults face growing risks of housing instability and homelessness.

Over half (54%) of New Hampshire residents aged 55 and older are cost burdened. As NH's population ages, fixed incomes, along with rising housing and healthcare costs, increase vulnerability to homelessness.

Youth homelessness extends beyond what service system data capture.

Although PIT and HMIS counts declined in 2024, school-based data and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) show that many young people experience housing instability outside of what is captured through traditional homelessness reporting systems.

Recent reductions in homelessness demonstrate coordinated statewide effort, but progress remains fragile.

Declines in PIT and HMIS data reflect effective outreach and housing interventions, yet structural pressures and increasing complexity among those most at risk persist.

Case management is central to successful housing stabilization.

Sustained, relationship-based case management is critical for NH residents experiencing homelessness to access housing, health care, income, and other essential services, particularly for individuals and families facing unsheltered and/or chronic homelessness.

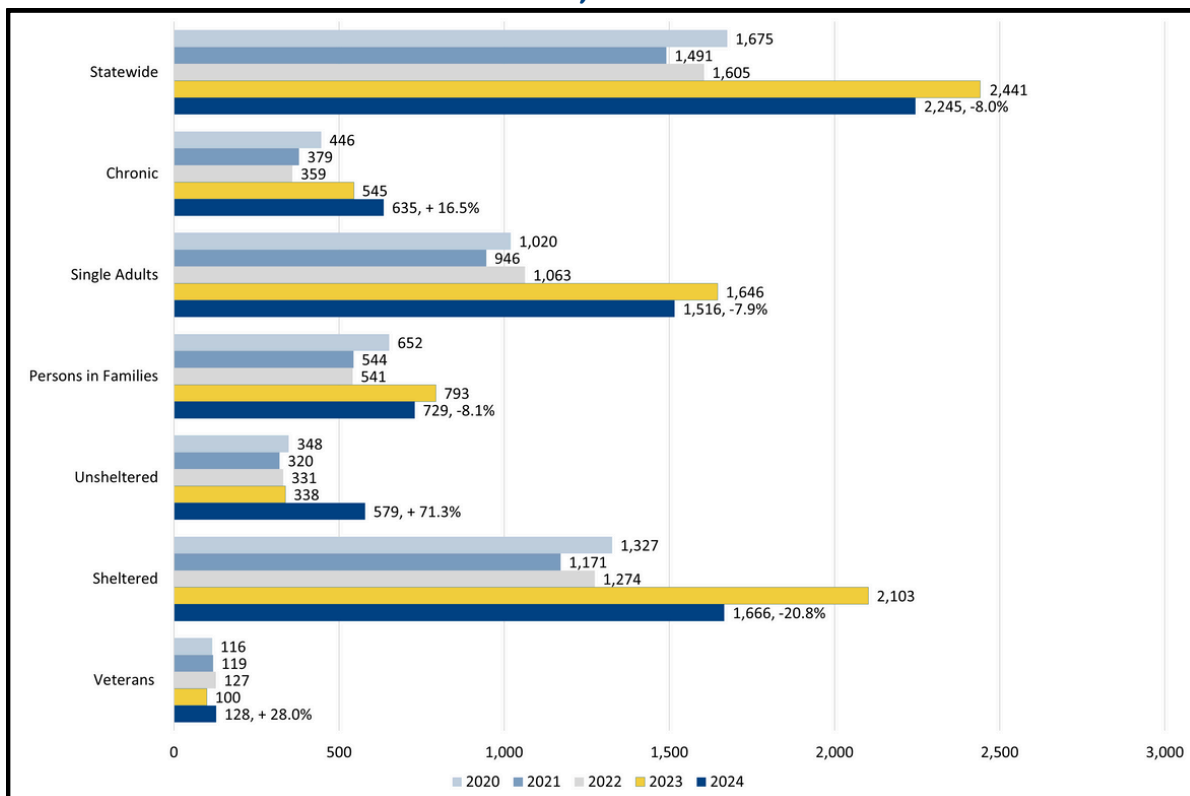
Federal policy changes introduce new uncertainty for NH's homelessness response system.

Shifts in HUD requirements and funding priorities raise concerns about program stability and capacity, potentially affecting the ability to sustain recent gains. It is estimated that these changes will put 170,000 individuals in the US, including over 400 NH residents, into homelessness.

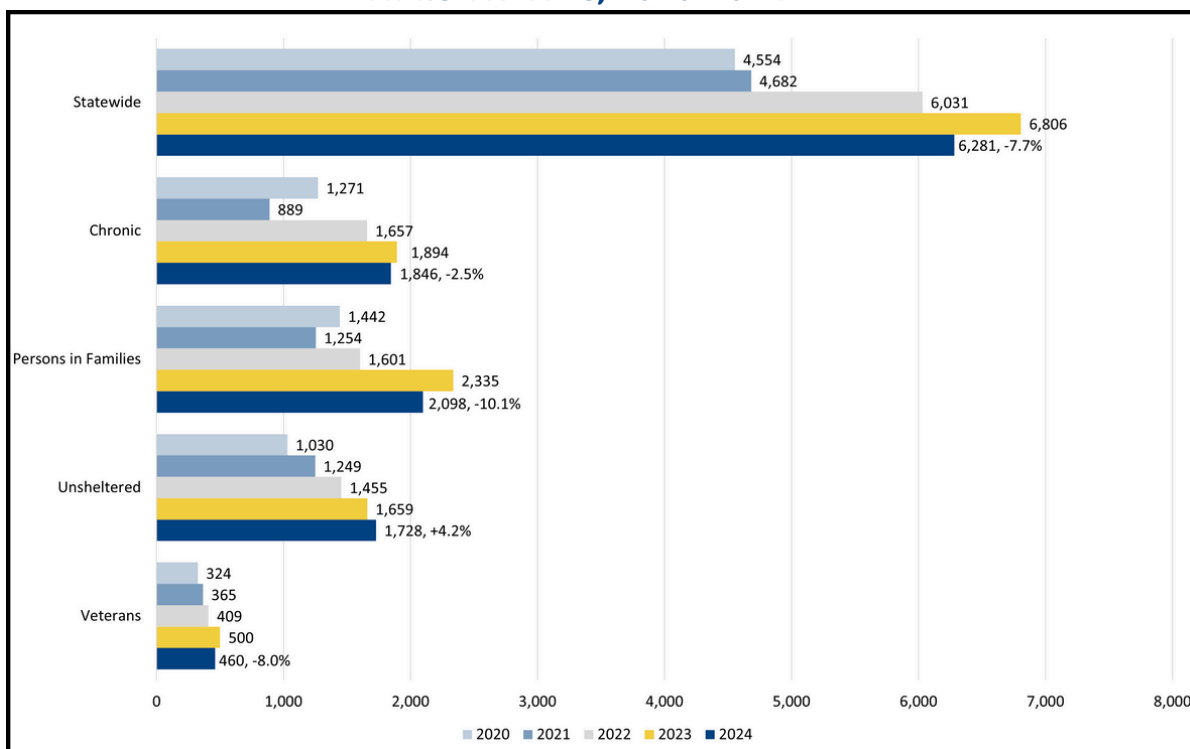


OVERVIEW OF STATEWIDE TRENDS

PIT TRENDS, 2020-2024



HMIS TRENDS, 2020-2024



OVERVIEW OF STATEWIDE TRENDS

Homelessness in New Hampshire remained a complex challenge in 2024, but the newest data show an early indication of meaningful progress. The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count documented an 8.0% decrease in homelessness—the third-highest percentage decline nationally—and yearlong HMIS data showed a 7.7% decrease in the number of people who accessed services. These improvements mark a sharp reversal from 2023, when New Hampshire experienced the largest percentage increase in PIT homelessness in the country.

At the same time, headline declines mask significant challenges beneath the surface. While family homelessness declined in both the PIT Count and HMIS data, and Veteran homelessness continued its downward trend, unsheltered homelessness increased 71.3% in the PIT Count and remains a critical area of concern. HMIS data indicate that although year-over-year growth in unsheltered homelessness has slowed, demand for services remains high. Together, these trends reflect both expanded outreach and persistent barriers to housing placement, particularly for individuals with higher service needs. Taken together, the PIT Count’s one-night snapshot and HMIS’s full-year service data provide a more complete picture of homelessness in New Hampshire. While overall counts declined in 2024, ongoing pressures related to housing availability and affordability continue to shape who enters the system and how long individuals and families remain homeless.

A look behind the numbers...

**Sometimes they stayed with friends, other times in local shelters,
always trying to stay one step ahead of instability and fear.**

When “Emily” arrived at Community Action Partnership of Strafford County’s (CAPSC) family shelter, Home for Now, she was exhausted — emotionally and physically. For nearly three years, she and her three children, including a newborn baby, had been moving from place to place after escaping a relationship marked by domestic violence.

Every move brought new uncertainty. Emily worried about where her kids would sleep next, how she could find work without stable childcare, and how to start over when everything felt temporary. But once she connected with Home for Now, things began to shift.

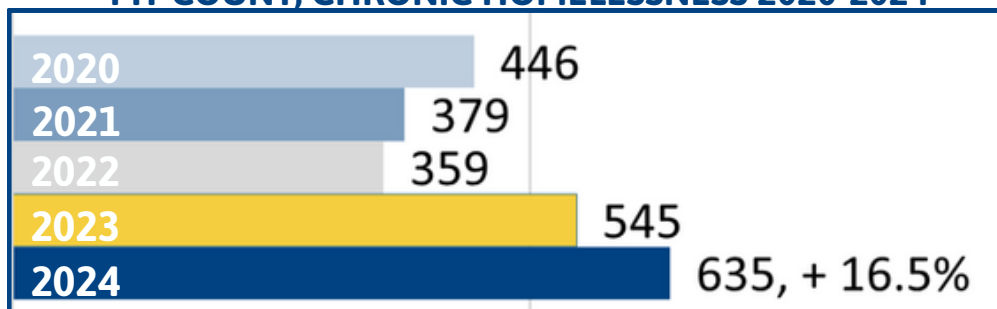
From the first night, staff ensured that Emily and her children felt safe, supported, and heard. Her shelter case manager worked closely with her to rebuild her confidence, connect her with counseling and trauma-informed support, and develop a housing plan. The CAPSC Housing Team helped her navigate the complex application process for public housing, a daunting task she once thought was out of reach.

After several months of persistence, paperwork, and partnership, Emily received the call she had been waiting for: her family had been approved for a public housing apartment. For the first time in years, she could put her children to bed without worrying about where they would wake up the next morning.

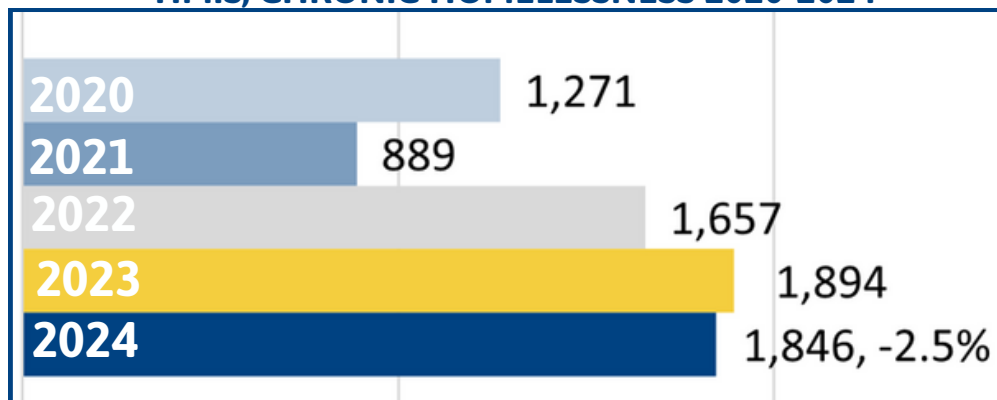
CHRONIC AND UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

Chronic and unsheltered homelessness represent the most severe and complex challenges within New Hampshire’s homelessness response system. Individuals experiencing these forms of homelessness face the greatest barriers to housing stability and often require intensive, long-term supports. While closely related, chronic and unsheltered homelessness reflect distinct patterns that are illustrated in the charts below, each requiring unique and targeted interventions.

PIT COUNT, CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS 2020-2024



HMIS, CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS 2020-2024



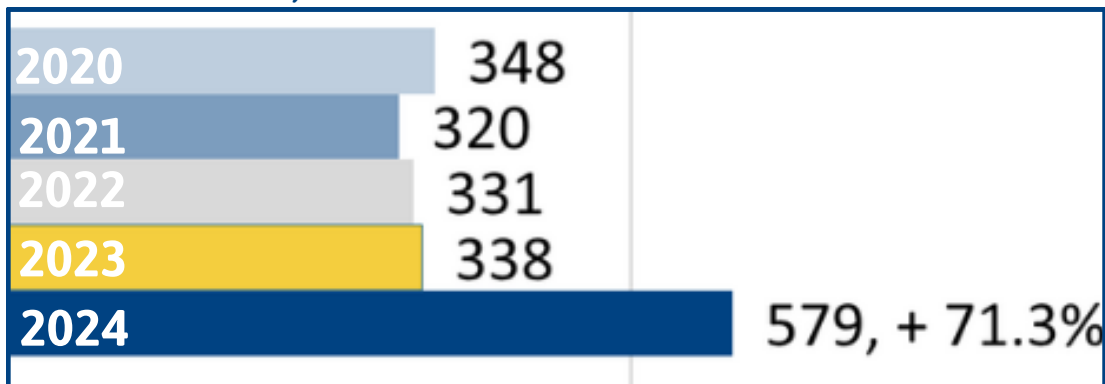
HUD defines chronic homelessness as an individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for 12 or more consecutive months or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years, whose combined length is at least 12 months. HUD identifies a break in homelessness as any period in time that a person does not meet the HUD definition of homelessness for a period of seven or more nights.

Although the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness declined slightly by 8% in 2024, people meeting the chronic definition continue to represent a growing share of the overall homeless population. According to the 2024 PIT Count data, chronic homelessness in NH increased from 2023 to 2024 by 16.5%, from 545 to 635 people. Since 2020, the number of people experiencing homelessness has increased by 42.5%, representing an additional 189 individuals. These trends reflect the difficulty of resolving homelessness for individuals with complex medical, behavioral health, and housing needs, particularly in a constrained housing market.

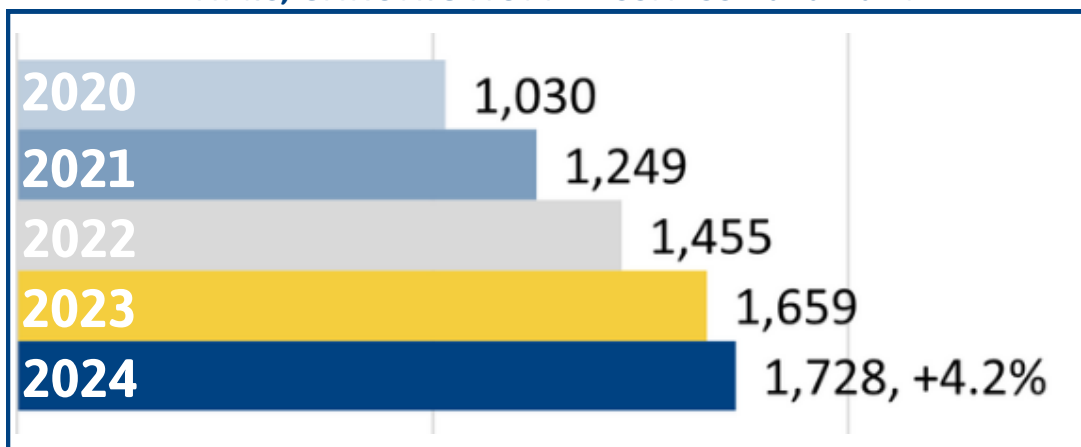


CHRONIC AND UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

PIT COUNT, UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS 2020-2024



HMIS, CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS 2020-2024



In NH, unsheltered homelessness has nearly quadrupled (388%) since 2019 and remains a critical area of concern. The 2024 Point-in-Time Count recorded an increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness without shelter, while HMIS data show that the pace of year-over-year growth has slowed. Together, these patterns suggest both improved outreach and identification efforts and ongoing limitations in housing availability and placement options for individuals with higher service needs. SOURCES

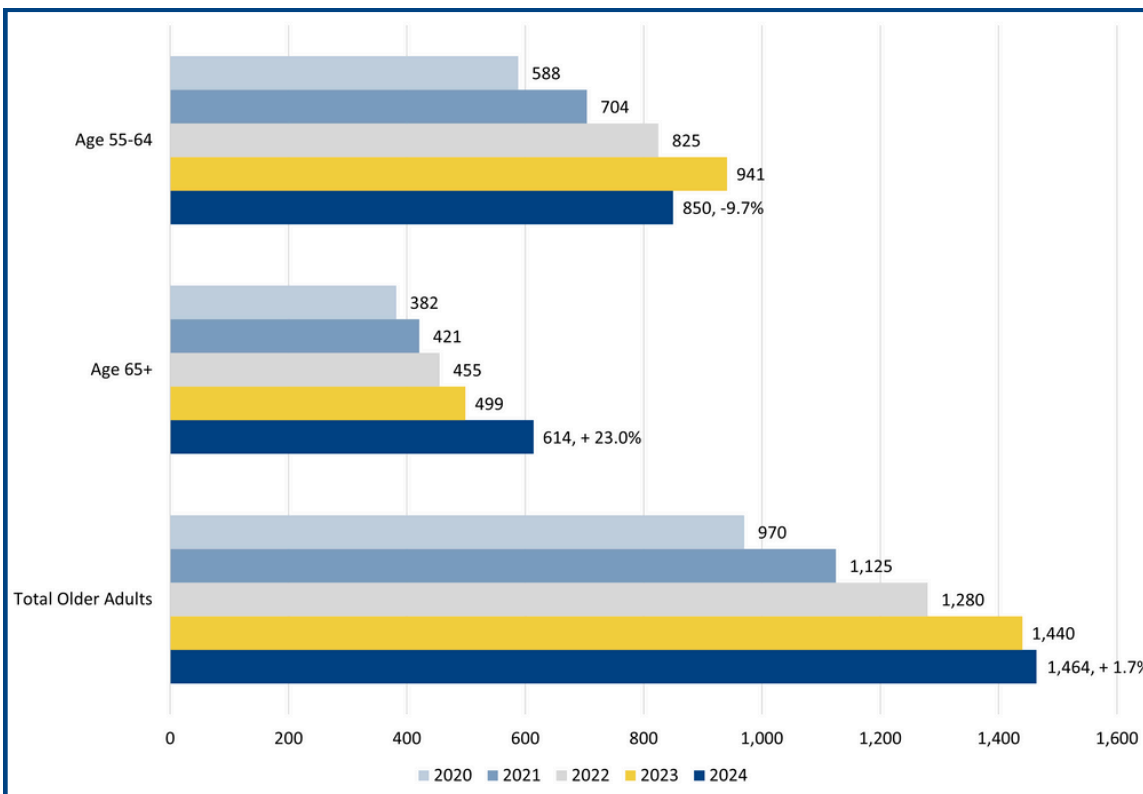
Examining the intersection of chronic and unsheltered homelessness during the 2024 PIT Count, 263 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness identified that they were also chronically homeless. This means that chronically homeless individuals made up 41.4% of the PIT Count unsheltered population, a significant increase from the 21.7% they constituted in 2023 – though not as high as 2020 (54.7%). SOURCES

Together, the chronic and unsheltered trends underscore the limits of short-term solutions. Sustained reductions in these populations depend on expanded permanent supportive housing, coordinated outreach, and integrated case management models that address both housing and underlying health conditions.

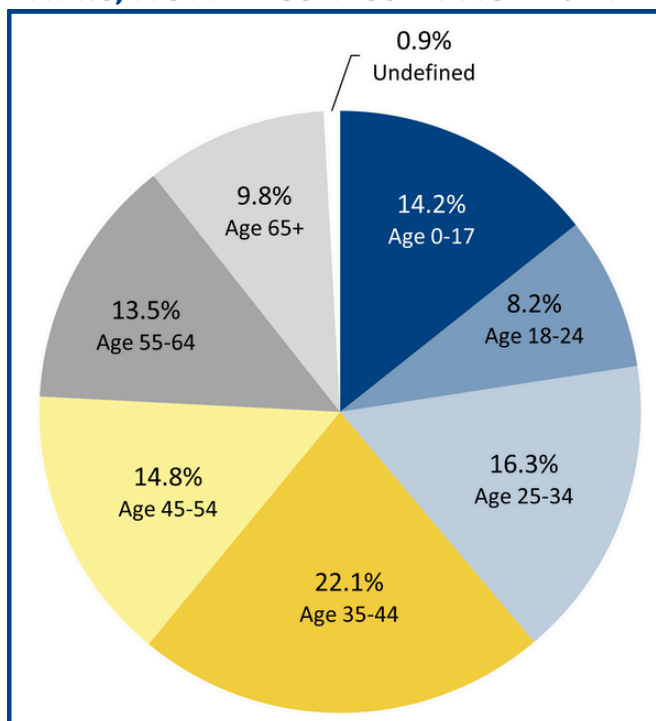


OLDER ADULT HOMELESSNESS

HMIS OLDER ADULT TRENDS, 2020-2024

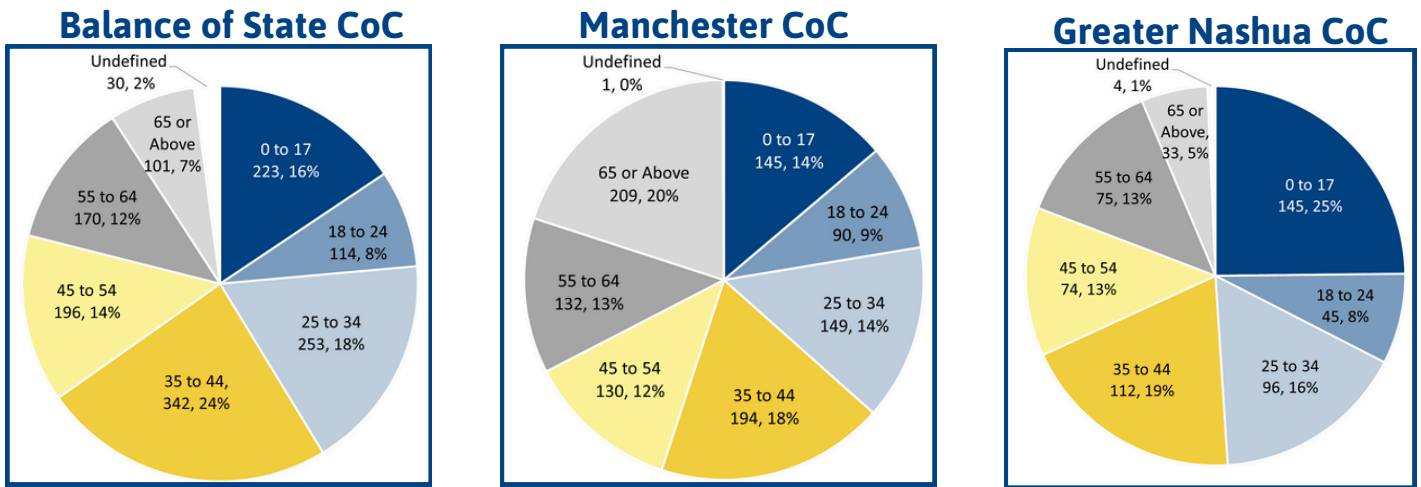


HMIS, HOMELESSNESS BY AGE 2024



OLDER ADULT HOMELESSNESS

First Time Homelessness by Age, 2024



Older adult homelessness has become an increasingly significant feature of NH’s homelessness landscape, and it is important to note that NH is the second oldest state in the country (source). As the state’s population continues to age, more older adults are entering homelessness with medical, mobility, and behavioral health needs that require intensive support. NH’s 2024 data reflect trends showing that adults aged 55 and older represent a growing share of NH residents experiencing homelessness. In 2024, almost 1 out of 4 people who experienced homelessness for the first time in their lives were age 55 or older.

Older adults face distinct challenges that contribute to both the onset and duration of homelessness. Fixed incomes that have not kept pace with rising rents, limited availability of accessible housing, and a higher prevalence of chronic health conditions increase vulnerability. Once homeless, older adults often experience longer episodes, worsening health outcomes, and more complex service needs, making housing stabilization more difficult without coordinated supports.

Providers across New Hampshire report that assisting older adults experiencing homelessness increasingly requires intensive coordination across housing, health care, and benefits systems. As this population grows, shelters not designed to meet complex medical and mobility needs are experiencing greater strain, particularly in the absence of medical respite options, limited nursing home availability, and hospital admission thresholds that leave few alternatives. These dynamics highlight the importance of robust case management and coordinated care models for older adults experiencing homelessness.

As New Hampshire’s demographic profile continues to shift, the number of older adults entering homelessness is likely to increase. The percentage of NH’s population who are age 65+ is projected to continue to increase through 2040 (source). This trend will place growing demand on supportive housing and integrated case management, underscoring the need for planning and investment to meet future system needs.



A LOOK BEHIND THE NUMBERS



“Nancy’s” Story

Erik Becker, Housing Stability Director with Tri County Community Action Program, shares the story of “Nancy,” a poignant example of just how complicated it can be for older adults to face housing instability or homelessness. Erik recounts a situation when an elderly woman living with both physical and cognitive impairments, as well as layered medical needs, was moved to his catchment area and placed in a remote and independently funded shelter during the winter months.

“We are seeing an increase in medically complex individuals. We need safe options that provide the level of care that a growing number of our vulnerable populations need.”

- Erik Becker, Tri County CAP

“Nancy” was fully dependent on her care team for her daily needs and was now nearly two hours away from the providers who were familiar to her and knowledgeable about the complexities of her medical history and care plan needs. She had no means of transportation to continue to access the support she needed. The shelter she was moved to was unable to provide the level of medical care she needed and multiple concerns quickly surfaced for her well-being. It took thoughtful collaboration between workers at multiple state agencies, two regional access points, medical professionals, non-profits, insurance liaisons, a kind hotel owner, and a welfare official to help her return to a stable housing situation where she could reliably access her care team.

Jackson’s Story

“When I was 18, I left college and moved back home to get my footing. Instead, I was told I couldn’t stay, and that was the moment I became unhoused. With no safety net and no plan, I called Waypoint’s TLP hotline, and that call got me into stable housing before things slid downhill.

Moving into the Transitional Living Program gave me more than a place to stay. It gave me structure, consistency, and enough breathing room to think clearly again. With stable housing, my life wasn’t dictated by constant uncertainty. I could work, rebuild routines, and make decisions based on goals instead of stress. Those two years became the foundation I needed to get my life under control.

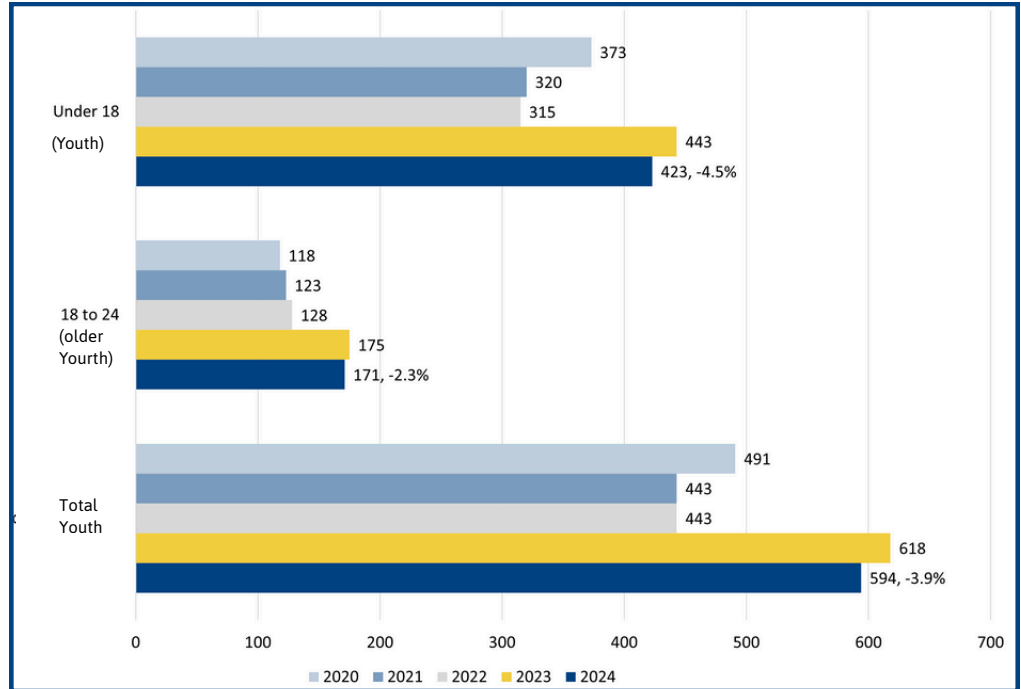
Stability is also what made it possible for me to grow into the work I do now as a community organizer and youth leader. As I figured things out, I ended up doing work around housing and youth issues because I wanted to make things easier for the next young person.

I share this because every young person deserves the same chance I got. When communities invest in stable housing, they make growth and possibility real. Decision-makers and community members can help make that a reality for more youth in New Hampshire.”



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

PIT Count, Youth Homelessness Trends, 202-2024



Youth homelessness remains a significant concern in New Hampshire, with patterns that differ from those observed among adults. The 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count documented a 3.9% decrease in youth homelessness, with no unaccompanied minors under age 18 were identified on the night of the count. HMIS data show a similar trend, with a 19% decrease in the number of children and young adults who accessed homelessness-related services over the course of the year. Youth ages 18 to 24 experienced the largest decline, though they continue to represent a substantial

share of the statewide population experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, youth homelessness is undercounted. Service system data capture only youth who meet HUD’s definition of homelessness, while school-based data exclude youth who are not enrolled, too young to attend school, enrolled in private schools, or experiencing homelessness outside the academic year.

Despite these improvements, many youth remain at elevated risk of housing instability. Unaccompanied youth and young adults often cycle between temporary living arrangements, short-term stays with friends, and periods of shelter use, resulting in instability that is not consistently captured by traditional homelessness measures.

Education-based data reinforce these patterns. The number of students experiencing homelessness in New Hampshire public schools increased by 1.5 percent, or 52 students, during the 2023–2024 school year, and 2023 New Hampshire Youth Risk Behavior Survey data indicate that 2.2 percent of middle and high school students reported experiencing housing instability during the past 30 days.

These trends underscore the importance of youth-specific housing and service pathways. Housing instability during adolescence and early adulthood can have lasting effects on educational attainment, employment, and health, making prevention and early intervention essential components of statewide homelessness planning.

NH Department of Education Student Homelessness Counts Trends, 2020-2024

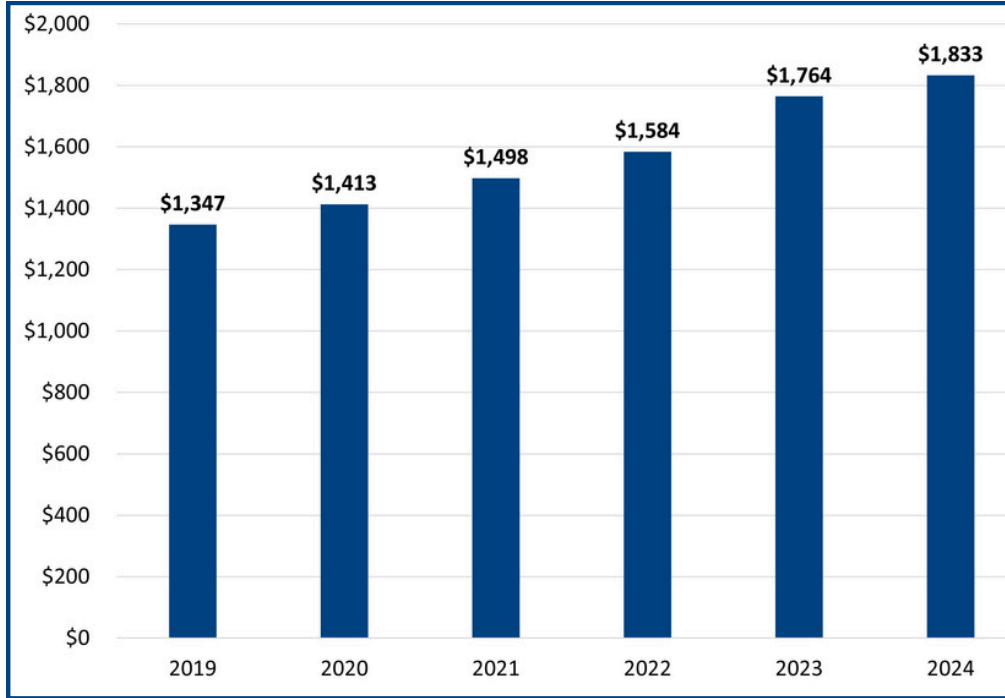
Student Homelessness	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Balance of State CoC	2,211	2,391	2,226
Greater Nashua CoC	398	403	439
Manchester CoC	769	796	784
Statewide Total*	3,323	3,555	3,607

*Statewide Total reflects unduplicated data

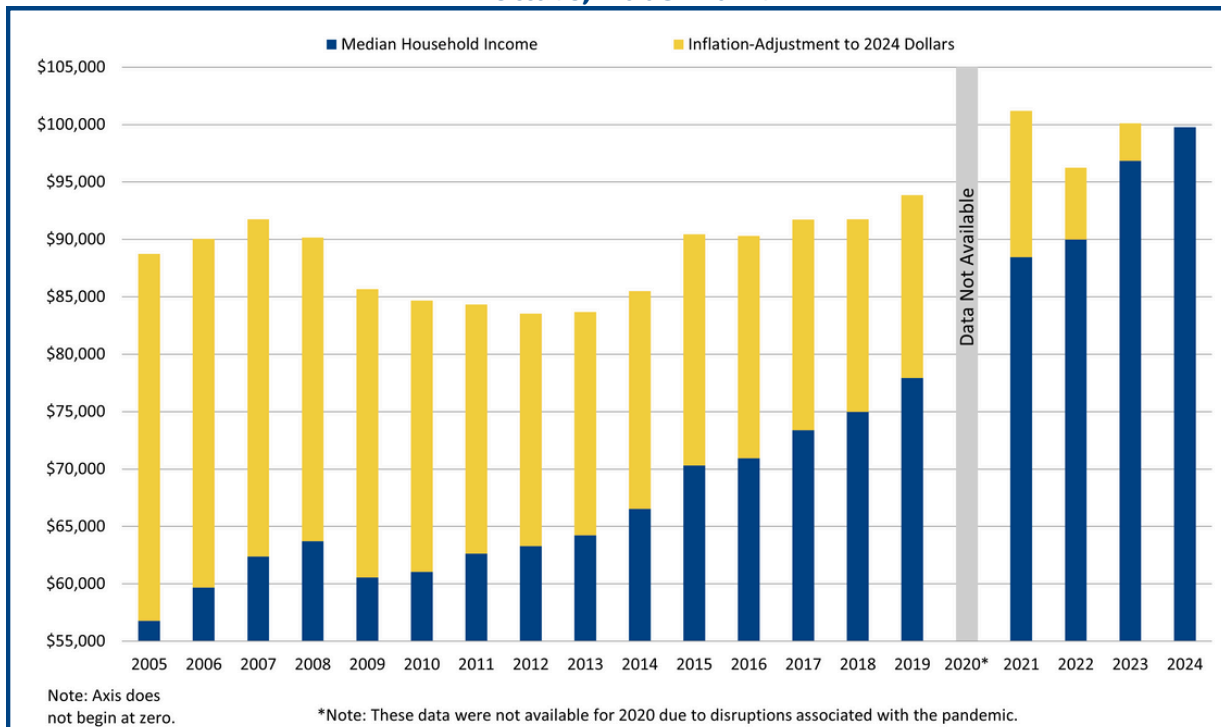


HOUSING ECONOMICS

**NH Median Monthly Rental Costs, Statewide,
 2024 - 2 BR Units**



**NH Median Income in 2024 Inflation-Adjusted
 Dollars, 2005-2024**



HOUSING ECONOMICS

The lack of affordable housing remains the primary structural driver of homelessness in New Hampshire. Rapidly rising rents, a severely constrained housing supply, and incomes that have not kept pace with housing costs are placing intense and growing pressure on households across the state. Even as overall homelessness declined in 2024, these conditions continue to increase the risk of housing instability and make it more difficult for individuals and families to exit homelessness once they enter the system.

Rental costs have risen sharply in recent years. Between 2019 and 2024, median gross rent for a two-bedroom apartment in New Hampshire increased by approximately 36 percent, adding nearly \$6,000 per year in housing costs for renters. While household incomes have increased over time, income growth has not kept pace with rising housing and living costs, particularly in the rental market. This imbalance leaves many low- and moderate-income households increasingly vulnerable to housing instability when faced with job loss, health challenges, or other financial disruptions.

Low housing vacancy rates further constrain the system's capacity to respond. Limited availability of rental units reduces options for households seeking to avoid homelessness and creates bottlenecks for individuals and families attempting to exit shelters or unsheltered situations. These constraints are especially pronounced for people with lower or fixed incomes and for those requiring accessible or supportive housing, including older adults and individuals experiencing chronic or unsheltered homelessness.

Cost burden remains widespread across the state, particularly among renters. A significant share of New Hampshire households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, leaving little room to absorb unexpected expenses or rising costs elsewhere. Among older adults, cost burden rates are especially high, reflecting the pressure of fixed incomes in a high-cost housing market. For households already at the margins, rising housing costs increasingly force tradeoffs between housing and basic necessities, leaving little financial margin for error and increasing the risk of sustained housing instability and homelessness.

Homelessness is not simply the absence of a roof. It is the condition of being unseen. It begins long before someone sleeps outside and can linger long after they come in from the cold. It is what happens when belonging is lost - when the world stops asking why.

-Miles Whitener, Granite Leader Alumni and Homeless Advocate

ENDNOTES

