

Health drivers

- ✔ **A lasting impact:** SAMHSA calls homelessness “a life-altering traumatic event”.
- ✔ Vermont has **the second highest rate** of unhoused residents per capita in the US.
- ✔ Vermont sheltered more than **95%** of unhoused residents in 2022, one of three states to do so.
- ✔ COVID shelter funding is **no longer available** but other shelter funds continue.
- ✔ **BIPOC and Indigenous Vermonters** experience homelessness at a greater rate than any other populations in Vermont.

The growth of unhoused residents:

2022: **2,780** 2023: **3,295**

A **197%** overall increase since 2020

In the 2023 Point In Time survey, **698** unhoused residents reported having serious mental illness and **232** substance use disorder

- ✔ **Poverty and lack of affordable housing** are cited as two key drivers in unstable housing.
- ✔ There was a **36% increase** in homelessness for families with children from 2022-2023.

- ✔ Vermont had the **US’s largest increase** in unhoused residents from 2020-2022.

Frequent hardships for children faced with homelessness:

- Limited access to **healthy foods**
- Limited access to **healthcare**
- Chronic **anxiety**
- Higher exposure to **substance use**
- Disrupted **education**
- Social **isolation**
- Increased **risk of homelessness** as adults

Health conditions

Healthcare access and cost exacerbate health problems for the unhoused.

The chronically unhoused have a 12-year shorter lifespan

92% of unhoused American mothers have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse, and 83% of unhoused children have been exposed to at least one serious act of violence by age 12. This underlines the need for trauma-informed services.

Drivers of poor health for unstably housed Vermonters:

- Emotional and physical stress
- Inability to store medications
- Exposure to increasingly extreme weather conditions
- Difficulty accessing adequate, healthy foods

Low incomes and limited housing options are major drivers of homelessness and also increase a person’s risk of developing serious health conditions.

Health conditions: Low-income adults...	with a disability	with arthritis	with asthma	ever diagnosed with cancer	with cardiovascular disease
All US	29%	25%	10%	7%	8%
All VT	25%	29%	12%	7%	8%
<25k income in VT	56%	40%	18%	12%	17%

Mental health issues and substance use disorders are more common among both the unstably housed and those with incomes less than \$25,000/year.

Key themes:

- Major financial strains
- Limited access to care
- Acute mental health needs
- Housing shortages

Important data limitations:

- Few data sources
- Difficult to count everyone
- Hard to get rural data
- Ever-shifting population

Data sources used in this document

- ✔ [CARES database](#), University of Missouri. Data compilation is from many resources, including and not limited to:
 - US Census Bureau
 - the American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-202
 - Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
 - Department of Transportation
 - Federal Bureau of Investigations
- ✔ [2022 Vermont Point in Time Report of People Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- ✔ [The most recent point in time 2023 tally, completed in January](#)
- ✔ [The 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress](#)
- ✔ [NAMI Fact Sheet](#)
- ✔ [Climate Change and Hot Weather](#), VT Dept of Health
- ✔ National Alliance to End Homelessness, State and CoC Dashboards:
<https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-dashboards/?State=Vermont>
- ✔ SAMHSA, U.S Dept of Health and Human Services.
<https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources>
- ✔ [With Pandemic Aid Ending, Vermont's Homeless are Forced from Hotels](#), NY Times, June 2023
- ✔ [Climate change and vulnerable populations](#), VT dept of Health
- ✔ Thorndike, A.L., Yetman, H.E., Thorndike, A.N. *et al.* Unmet health needs and barriers to health care among people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco's Mission District: a qualitative study. *BMC Public Health* **22**, 1071 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13499-w>
- ✔ Omerov, P, Craftman, ÅG, Mattsson, E, Klarare, A. Homeless persons' experiences of health- and social care: A systematic integrative review. *Health Soc Care Community*. 2020; 28: 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12857>
- ✔ [Disaster Response for Homeless Individuals and Families: A Trauma Informed Approach](#), U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
- ✔ Heat & Houselessness: Health Impacts and Unmet Needs, Vt Department of Health, June 2023 Data Brief.
- ✔ [National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Homelessness and Health, What's the Connection? February 2019](#)