

Social Determinants of Health

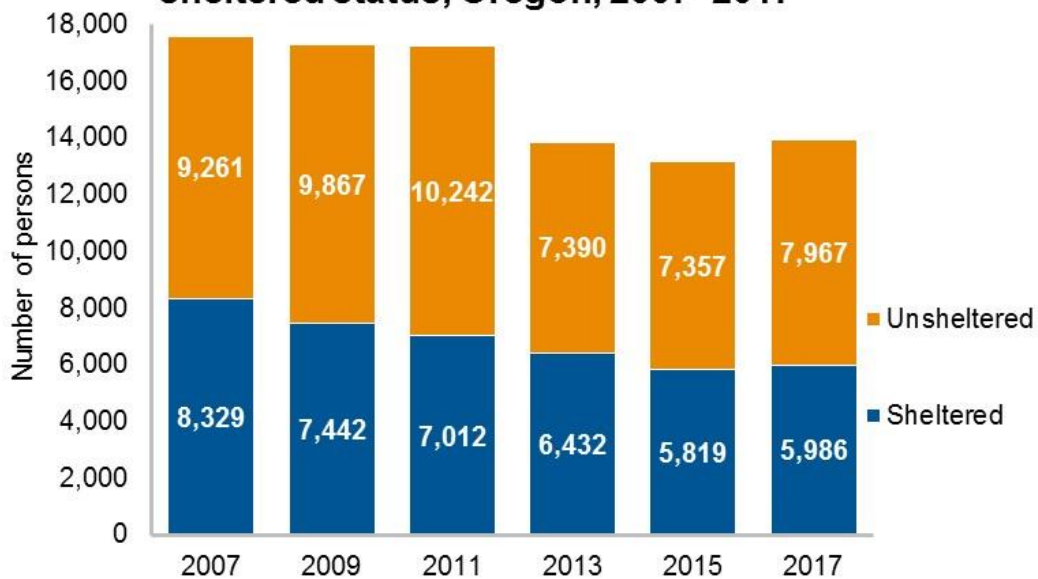
Homelessness

Every two years, Oregon Housing and Community Services releases data from the Point-in-Time count of the homeless population in Oregon. Occurring over one night in January, this count provides a snapshot of homelessness in the state. The data include both persons in emergency shelters and transitional housing, and those living unsheltered in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, and on the street. For several reasons including the difficulties of counting unsheltered people in winter these estimates are probably an undercount of the total homeless population in Oregon.

The number of homeless persons in Oregon decreased from 2007 to 2015 (Figure 1)¹. But, from 2015 to 2017 that number increased by 6% from 13,176 to 13,953. This was an increase in both the sheltered and unsheltered homeless population.

FIGURE 1

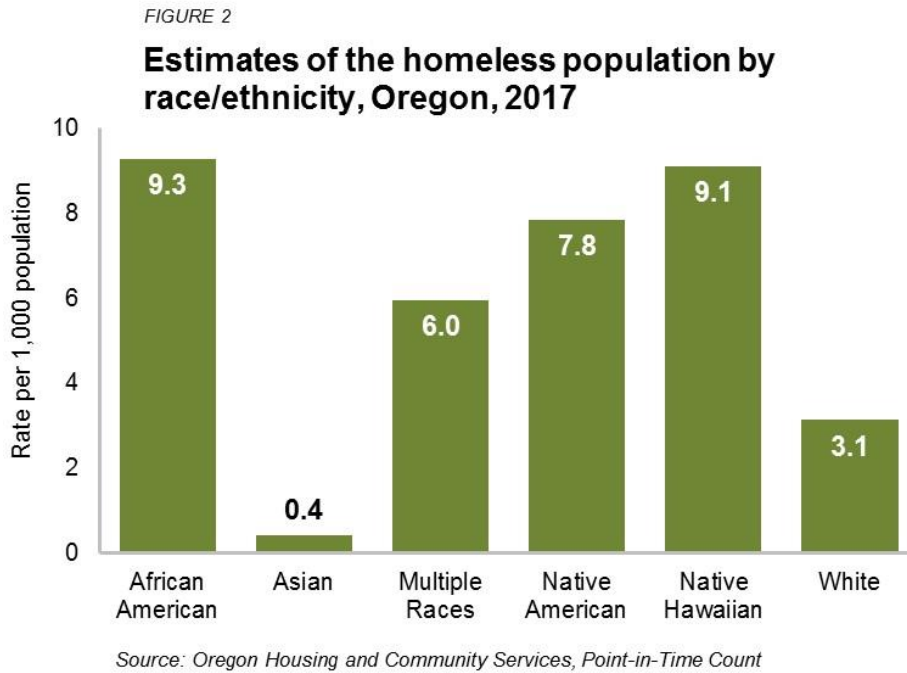
Estimates of the homeless population by sheltered status, Oregon, 2007–2017



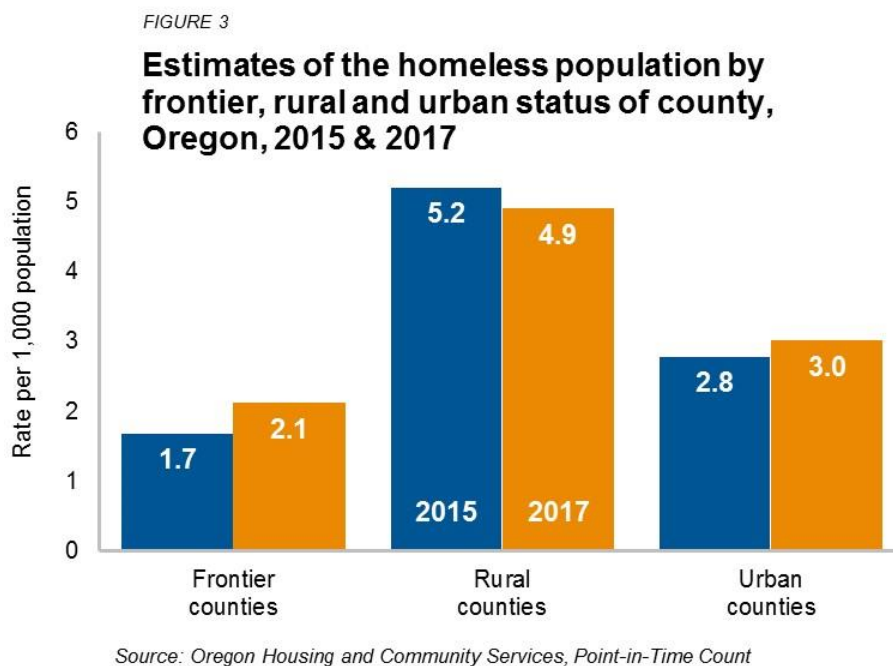
Source: Oregon Housing and Community Services, Point-in-Time Count

¹ Caution should be taken when identifying trends in the number of people experiencing homelessness over time. Many factors affect the results of the Point-in-Time count including changes in methodology, volunteer availability, agency staff involvement, and weather conditions.

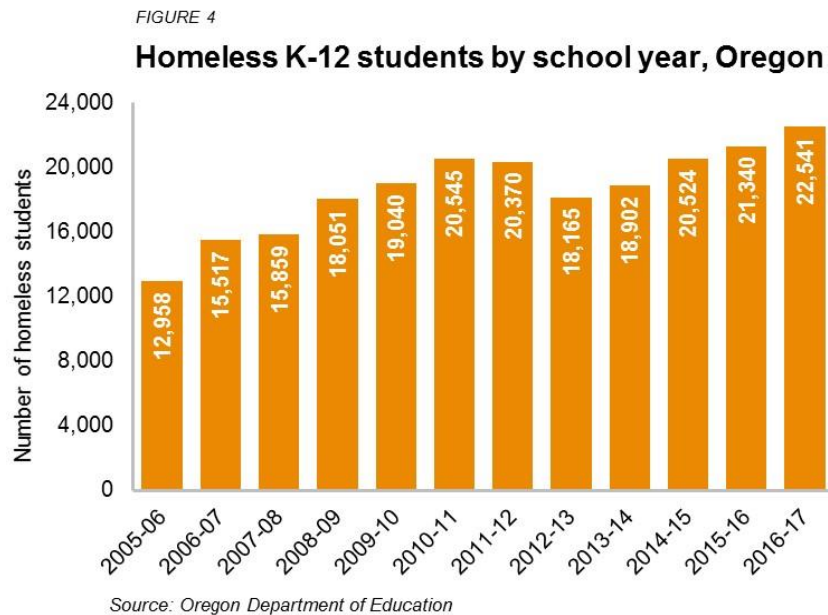
In Oregon, African Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and people of multiple races experience homelessness at a disproportionate rate (Figure 2).



Although Multnomah County had the highest number of homeless person in 2017 (4,177), Clatsop County had the highest proportion relative to the size of the total county population (17.4 per 1,000 vs. 5.2 per 1,000 for Multnomah County). Rural counties combined had a higher rate of homelessness (4.9 per 1,000) than urban (3.0 per 1,000) or frontier (2.2 per 1,000) counties in 2017 (Figure 3).



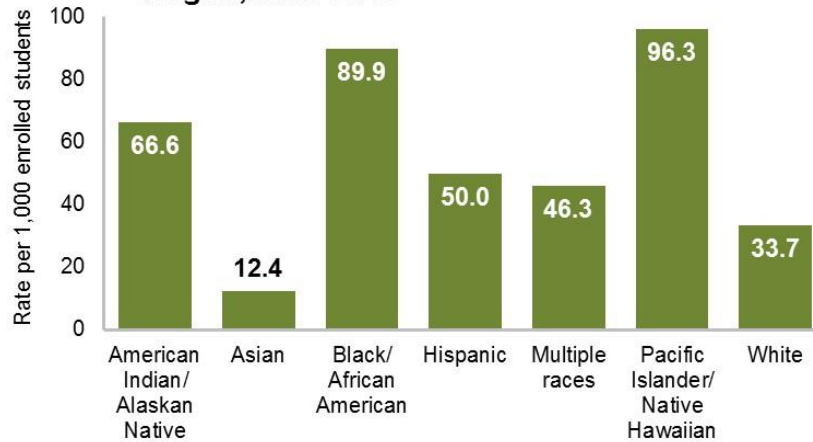
The Oregon Department of Education collects data on homeless public school students enrolled in Kindergarten through 12th grade. The definition of homelessness for students is broader than that used in the Point-in-Time as seen in the larger numbers. The number of homeless students has increased every school year since 2012-13 (Figure 4). In the 2016-17 school year there were 22,541 homeless students representing 3.9% of the enrolled K-12 student population. Of those, 76% lived in shared housing, 5% lived in motels, 9% lived in shelters and 11% were unsheltered.



The highest rates of student homelessness are among Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiians, African Americans and American Indian/Alaska Natives (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5

Homeless K-12 students by race/ethnicity, Oregon, 2016–2017



*Note: All other groups exclude Hispanic ethnicity
Source: Oregon Department of Education*

As with overall homelessness in the state, rural counties as a group have higher rates of student homelessness (44.0 per 1,000 enrolled students) than either frontier (40.8 per 1,000) or urban (39.8 per 1,000) counties.

Additional Resources: [Oregon Housing and Community Services](#); [Oregon Department of Education](#)

About the Data: Data sources are the Oregon Point-in-Time count and the Oregon Department of Education.

The Point-in-Time count is part of a nationwide effort to count every homeless person across the country and is conducted every year at the end of January. Because HUD only requires counts of the unsheltered population every other year, comparisons of Oregon data are only done for odd-numbered years. Data for the Point-in-Time count are collected by seven HUD Continuums of Care (CoCs) throughout the state. The numbers presented here only include the HUD definition of homelessness even though some CoCs use an expanded definition in their count. “Sheltered” includes people living in emergency shelters and transitional housing. “Unsheltered” is defined by HUD as people who are staying in places not meant for people to live such as in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, and on the street.

Data from the Oregon Department of Education includes counts of enrolled Kindergarten through Grade 12 students who are homeless during the school year (September through June). The federal government classifies students as homeless if they “lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence”. That includes children and youth living in motels or hotels due to lack of alternative housing; living in over-crowded and/or substandard housing; and children and youth who are doubled-up (ie. sharing lodging with relatives or friends due to loss of housing or similar circumstances). State totals are “unduplicated.” Totals of grade level, living situation, county or district level data will include duplicate data, due to student mobility.

Because of the dissimilar data collection methods and definitions, these two data sources provide separate looks at the homeless population in Oregon.

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[Oregon State Health Profile](#)

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