Overall Homelessness 2024
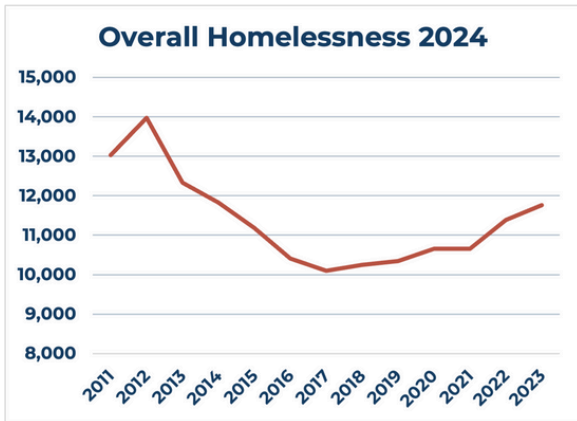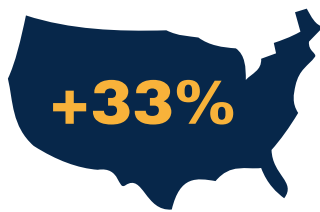

The primary cause of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing. A decade ago, Ohio started making significant reductions in homelessness thanks to increased federal funding and effective housing first policies. In recent years however, rampant rent inflation combined with the end of pandemic assistance have reversed progress, and Ohio's homeless population is rising again.

Reducing homelessness will require local, state, and federal leaders to increase the supply of affordable housing and fund the services necessary to prevent homelessness, quickly rehouse people, and keep them stably housed.
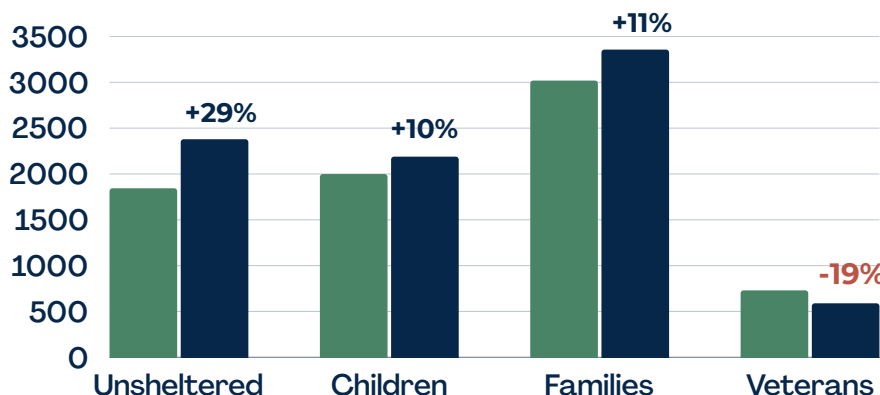
Homelessness since the Pandemic

+33%

+10%

Ohio's homeless population grew 10% from 2020 to 2024, far less than the national increase of 33%. This slower growth is the result of the adoption of effective housing first policies and Ohio's relatively low rents compared to coastal cities where extremely high rents are driving huge increases in homelessness.

Homelessness appears to be growing even faster because the unsheltered population has increased 29% since the pandemic. Family homelessness increased 11% as skyrocketing rents and dwindling assistance is driving more families with children to become unhoused.
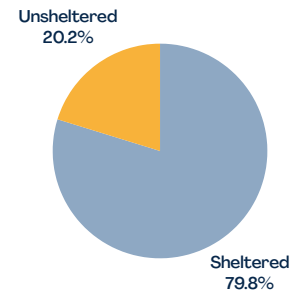
The one group that has decreased are veterans. The number of homeless veterans dropped 19% thanks to adequate federal funding, a housing first approach for this population, and effective multi-agency collaboration.

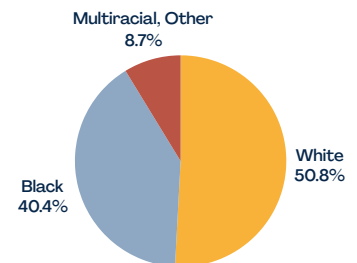- **January 2020** | Overall homeless population = 10,655
- **January 2024** | Overall homeless population = 11,759

Sheltered, Unsheltered & Race

Unsheltered 20.2%

Sheltered 79.8%

While unsheltered homelessness is more visible, the vast majority of unhoused Ohioans actually live in shelters, transitional housing, and other emergency programs.

Decades of discriminatory housing policies and unequal housing opportunities caused deep disparities in Ohio's homeless population. While Black Ohioans comprise only 13% of the state's overall population, they make up nearly half of the homeless population.

Multiracial, Other 8.7%

White 50.8%

Black 40.4%

Data Note: The PIT count estimates the number of people experiencing homelessness on one day in January. While not a precise census, the data do indicate trends in the homeless population over time.