The University of Chicago

Disaggregating Trends In Homeless Subpopulations

Quantifying the effects of Latin American asylum seekers and the growth of West Coast unsheltered homelessness on spiking homeless estimates

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Abstract

Between January 2022 and January 2023, the estimated homelessness population in the United States increased 12% from 582,462 to 653,104. This is not only the largest increase in US homelessness on record in the new millennium, it also brings the highest estimated homeless population since 2007. In this work, we disaggregate this increase to the local level to discover the subpopulation trends it is composed of. Namely, this spike is composed of an influx of South and Central American asylum seekers arriving in New York City, Chicago, and Denver and the continuation of a 7 year growth trend in unsheltered homelessness along the West Coast. We recommend the clinics to expedite the work permit and moving process for asylum seekers, coordinated landlord outreach and moving events, and geographic redistribution of asylum seekers to counties with more shelter capacity.

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I. Introduction

Boston Massachusetts is one of the most storied cities in America. As the site of famous revolutionary moments such as the Boston Tea Party, Paul Revere's Midnight Watch, and the Boston Massacre, it has deep roots in the formation and definition of the United States. The city remains relevant today for its legendary sports dynasties, world-renowned institutions of higher learning, and reminders of who we are. As of 2022, it was the 25th largest city in the nation with 651,000 inhabitants (US Census Bureau, 2023).

Boston's impact goes beyond insufferable sports fans and historical sites. In his 1630 sermon, Puritan lawyer John Winthrop declared that the colony founded in New England was to be a "city upon a hill," a beacon of exceptional Christian charity for all those to look up to (Gilder Lehrman Institute, 2023). A sentiment that has persisted beyond 1630 to be quoted by nearly every president since John F. Kennedy (Van Engen, 2020). This moniker of Boston has a nationally-relevant cultural meaning that extends beyond the original religious bent of the sermon. It instantiates the idea of America as a beacon of hope whose charity and success go hand-in-hand to produce not only a nation, but an example. As so eloquently put by Emma Lazarus and immortalized at the base of the Statue of Liberty: "Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door" (Lazarus, 1883). It is this beautiful idea of a nation that the American experiment strives towards.

As of January 2023, the population of our homeless and tempest-tossed is larger than that of Boston, the city upon a hill. Over the year prior, the US saw the largest increase in homelessness on record in the new millennium and the sudden acceleration of a trend 7 years in the making. Unsurprisingly, homelessness is now a growing political priority as people face the failures on the other side of the golden door. From New York City to Denver and LA, mayors in

US cities are facing increasing pressure from constituents on the issue of visible homelessness on their streets (Frank et al., 2023). In a poll from the Bipartisan Policy Center, half of respondents said they have observed an increase in homelessness in their communities while over 8 in 10 believe a plan to significantly reduce homelessness should be a priority for presidential candidates (Torres, 2023). These new numbers indicate that something new has shifted an already large and under-addressed problem.

Every January since 2007, communities across the US participate in the annual Point-In-Time (PIT) count homelessness survey. It stands as the best current estimate of total homelessness at both the national and local levels. The results of this survey, and the broad story of 21st-century US homelessness, can be seen below in Figure 1 (Sousa et al., 2023).

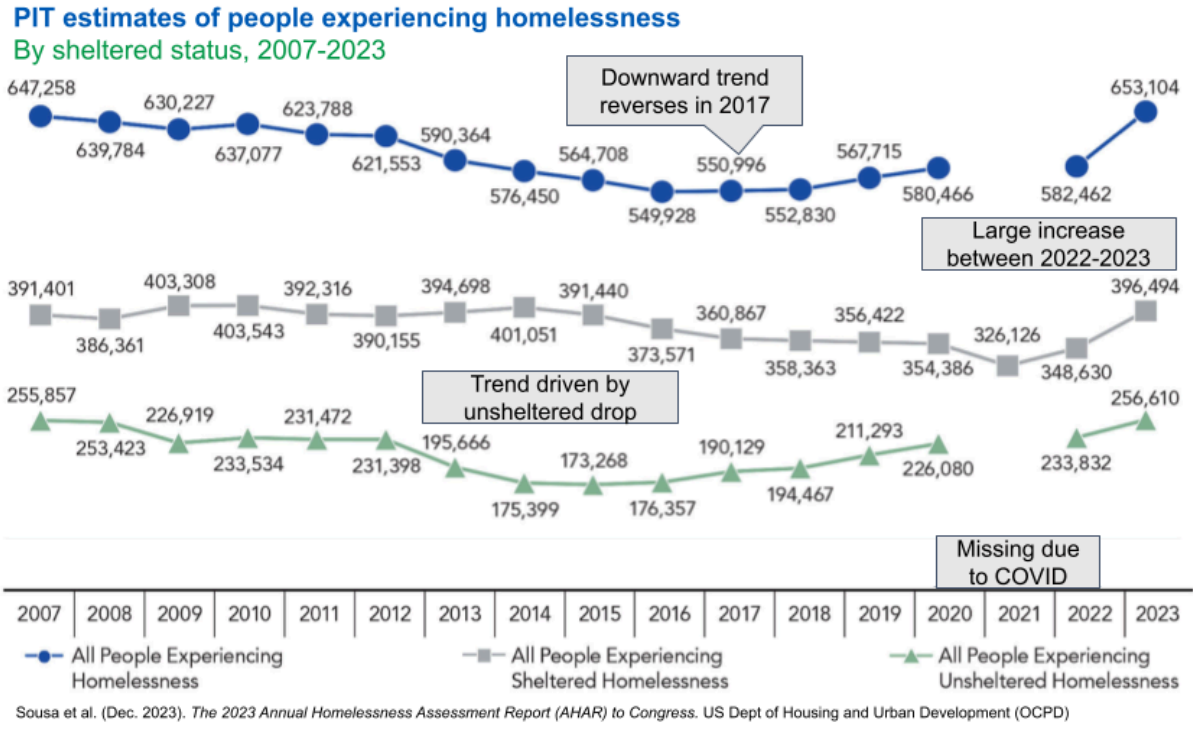


Figure 1: The above displays an annotated version of Figure 1.1 from Sousa et al. 2023. It contains the annual PIT population estimates aggregated to the national level from 2007-2023 as counted at the end of January for each respective year. The dark blue line displays the total US estimate; the gray is people living in an emergency shelter, hotel, motel, etc. paid for by the government or a charitable organization; and the green is those living without any shelter at the time of the survey. Note that there is no survey data for the unsheltered population in Jan. 2021 due to limitations in survey methodology brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

After hitting a historic low in 2015, total homelessness, as seen in blue, has steadily climbed upwards in step with unsheltered, or street homelessness, shown in green. Left alone this unsheltered homelessness growth would bring us to new heights in a few years, but 2022 saw a sudden spike in sheltered homelessness. Defined as people living in federal, city government, and non-profit-provided infrastructure, this population has been decreasing since 2016. Yet between 2022 and 2023, some new shocks pushed the US to pre-2016 heights. Combined, these trends in unsheltered and sheltered homelessness have put the estimated unhoused population at the highest level since this data has been collected. We see this same story play out when accounting for US population growth, the national increase in homelessness is outpacing said growth, increasing the per capita rate of homelessness in the United States. The same steady unsheltered climb and acute sheltered jump can also be observed in Figure 2 below.

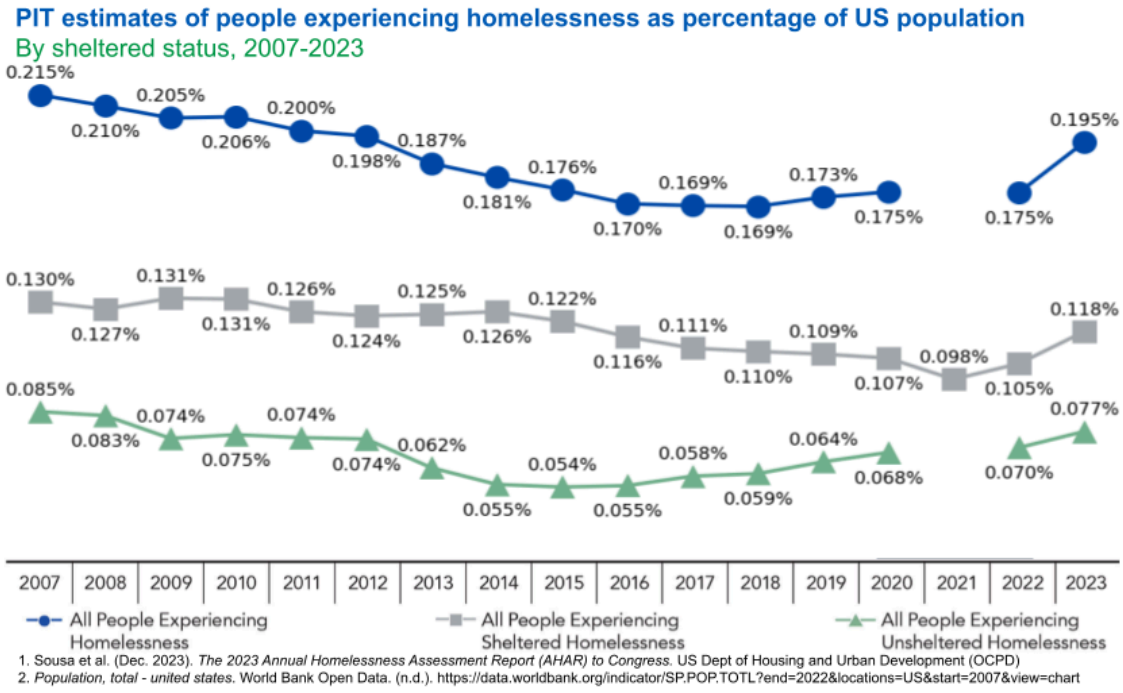


Figure 2: The above shows the estimates from Figure 1 normalized by the US population as reported by World Bank Open Data. The decrease from 2012-2016 driven by unsheltered estimates remains, as does the trend reversal from 2017 onward. We can see that the most recent January 2023 estimate is both a new high in raw count and approaching pre-2012 homelessness rates.

The early 2000s can be characterized by steadily declining homelessness rates through around 2016. But when splitting this progress into sheltered and unsheltered trends, it becomes clear that the massive drop in estimated unsheltered homelessness between 2012 to 2014 had a large role to play. Unsheltered dynamics continued to lead the charge in pulling rates back up between 2016-2022. The whole time, sheltered rates decreased steadily until an uncharacteristic jump over 2022. All together, this shock has accelerated the aggregate effects of an already growing unsheltered trend. If left unaddressed, these new unidentified sheltered stressors may exacerbate unsheltered trends and bring US homelessness to sustained new heights.

The recency of these trends is a driving factor of this work. While there is great academic literature on the effectiveness of city-level homeless service interventions and critiques of pre-2020 economic conditions' impacts on homelessness, the body of work done on the jump detected in January 2023 is nearly entirely contained in local government reporting and only collected for national-level review by the 2023 Point In Time survey report released in December of 2023 (Sousa et al., 2023).

These national-level trends mask substantial heterogeneity in the dynamics, driving forces, and affected subpopulations of homelessness nationwide. This most recent jump indicates a new shock to the problem space but also contains complex post-2016 trends. In order for the US to begin addressing homelessness at the national, state, or local level, a much more nuanced understanding of this complexity is required. What drives homelessness in Denver is not the same as in Los Angeles, and much-needed academic research agendas and governmental programs must understand these differences if progress is to be made in the face of what may be a new crisis.

We should care about our homeless neighbors regardless of the count that appears on these annual reports. While daunting, progress is possible. The new spike has made local governments step back and reassess their approaches to serving their unhoused constituents and the Biden administration announced a new initiative to address homelessness (The White House, 2023). We must acknowledge and take advantage of this critical and rare juncture when resources and political will are forming. No two cities are experiencing this crisis the same way, and truly tackling it requires unpacking this heterogeneity so that we can leverage resources for maximum effect.

With this in mind, this work aims to disaggregate the 2022-2023 estimated increase into relevant subpopulation trends to explain why the observed spike in homelessness was unprecedentedly large. Furthermore, we seek to understand how national-level trends in homelessness vary across time, geographies, subpopulations, and estimate methodologies. Through this descriptive process, we hope to uncover critical and time-sensitive areas for new research and policy interventions.

To shine a light on what has been foreshadowed, the large increase in homelessness estimates between January 2022-2023 is made up of three main components. (1) An acute jump in sheltered homelessness from South and Central American migrants seeking asylum in major US cities like New York, Chicago, and Denver; (2) the continued steady rise of unsheltered homelessness on the West Coast, and California in particular, in cities like Los Angeles, Sacramento, Berkeley, Seattle, and Portland; (3) inflated unsheltered increase due to methodological limitations in some regions (i.e. Texas) during the January 2022 unsheltered survey. As we will show, the “migrant crisis,” as it has been dubbed by the media, is responsible

for nearly doubling the estimated 2022-2023 jump and is currently placing immense strain on homeless services.

II. Background

The modern history of homeless policy and response begins with the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, which established federal definitions of homelessness, the Interagency Council on the Homeless, housing assistance programs, and service provider grant programs specifically to address rising homelessness (100th Congress, 1987). Since then, the federal government has amended and re-appropriated this act to provide federal support for programs nationwide.

Fast forwarding to the new millennium, the next major wave of relevant policy came in response to the Great Recession. A full timeline from 2005-2014 can be seen in Figure 3. After the collapse of the housing bubble, the Obama administration began funding new forms of homeless services, appropriating funds for more shelter infrastructure, and kickstarting programs targeted at increasing the supply of affordable housing. This also marks the beginning of a shift in national service priorities. Before delving deeper, it is important to define key federally funded services and terms (Sousa et al., 2023).

1) **Sheltered Homelessness** — refers to people who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens.
2) **Unsheltered Homelessness** — refers to people whose primary nighttime location is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for people (for example, the streets, vehicles, or parks).
3) **Chronic Homelessness** — refers to an individual with a disability who has been continuously experiencing homelessness for one year or more, or has experienced at least

four episodes of homelessness in the last three years where the combined length of time experiencing homelessness on those occasions is at least 12 months.

4) **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** — a housing model designed to provide housing assistance (project and tenant-based) and supportive services on a long-term basis to clients with a disability. Once in PSH, clients are considered formerly homeless.
5) **Transitional Housing (TH)** — a unit that provides people experiencing homelessness a place to stay combined with supportive services for up to 24 months. These are meant to provide shelter and case services while people achieve stability in employment and/or health.
6) **Emergency Shelter (ES)** — a facility with the primary purpose of providing short-term temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness.
7) **Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)** — a housing model designed to provide temporary housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness, moving them as quickly as possible out of their episode of homelessness and into short to mid-term (6-18 months) permanent housing and services.
8) **Other Permanent Housing (OPH)** — housing with or without services that is specifically for people who formerly experienced homelessness but that does not require people to have a disability.
9) **Safe Havens (SH)** — projects that provide private or semi-private temporary shelter and services to people experiencing severe mental illness which are limited to serving no more than 25 people within a facility.

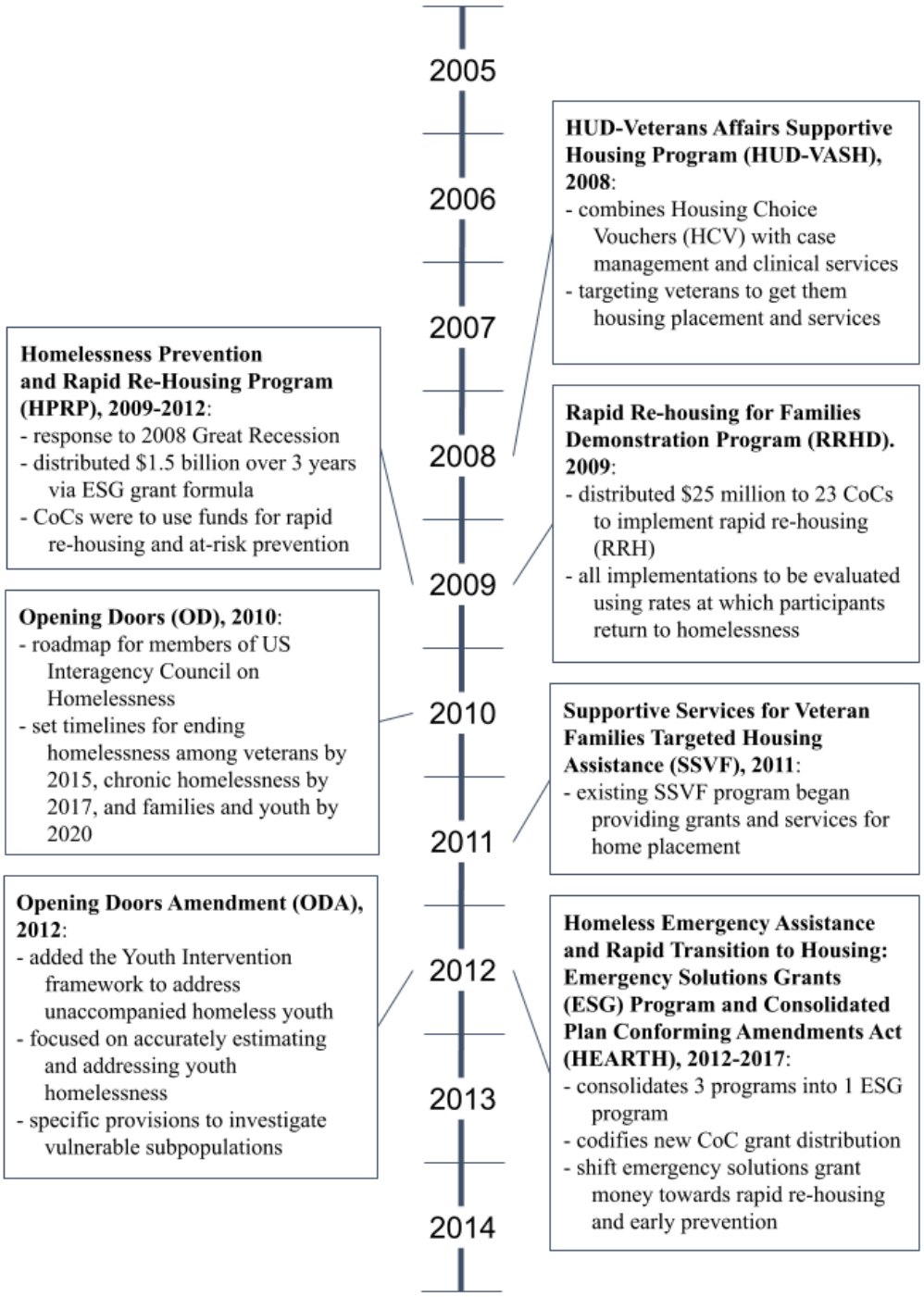


Figure 3: US federal homelessness-relevant policy timeline (2005-2014). The years indicate when the first interim rule was published. The federal rulemaking process lays out implementation details, and as such policies do not begin being put in place until these initial rules are released. The bulk of federal policy related to homelessness came in response to the Great Recession and the 2007 Homelessness Research Symposium. There is a stated interest in funding and testing RRH programming via the HPRP and RRHD programs.

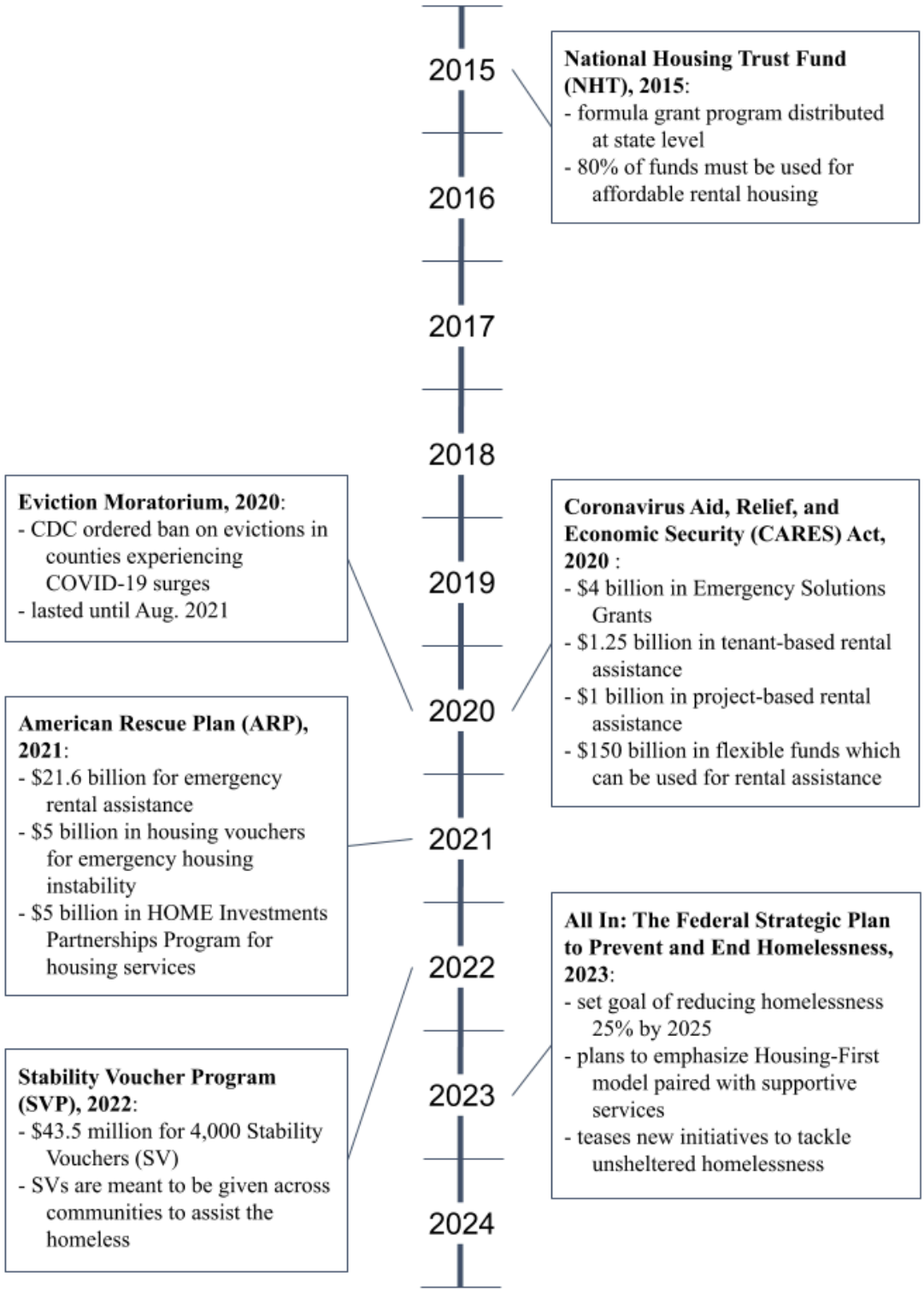


Figure 4: US federal homelessness-relevant policy timeline (2014-2024). The years indicate when the first interim rule was published. The federal rulemaking process lays out implementation details, and as such policies do not begin being put in place until these initial rules are released. The bulk of investment in this period comes in the form of federal aid grants in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

10) **Rapid Re-Housing Demonstration Program (DEM)** — a temporary program in which the Obama administration funded Rapid Re-Housing implementations and follow-up studies in 23 communities across the nation to test the effectiveness of RRH.

In 2007, the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) hosted the 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research, where several papers discussed the successes of PSH in addressing chronic homelessness, the recent successes of housing first models, and the cost-effectiveness of multiple RRH implementations (Pearson et al., 2007; Burt & Spellman, 2007; Caton et al., 2007). As described by Caton et al., "[t]he housing first model is generally defined as a program that places people directly into affordable housing without requiring that tenants be 'housing ready' prior to entry" (2007, p. 4-18). It is often associated with RRH programming, which explicitly focuses on removing bureaucratic barriers to achieve fast re-housing for clients, hence "rapid" re-housing (HUD, 2023). In response to the Great Recession, the federal government launched the Rapid Re-Housing for Families Demonstration (RRHD) and Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) in 2009 (HUD, 2023; HUD, 2023). Both of which, among other things, distributed grant money to US communities to implement RRH programming.

The primary 3 programs in 2008 were PSH, TH, and ES which, split evenly between the three of them, had approximately the same number of beds available as the estimated total homeless population (Figure 5). That is not to say that all of these were utilized year-round. The total number of program beds steadily climbed and surpassed the estimated unhoused population between 2008 and 2012. The nation then saw a rapid reduction in TH programs, falling from 200,000 to 100,000 beds by 2018 (HUD, 2023). Meanwhile, PSH and ES total bed counts

increased by 31% and 25% respectively over the same period. Not so coincidentally, 2013 marks the beginning of many federally funded RRH programs. As the nation lost 100,000 TH beds, it gained 100,000 RRH beds in the same period.

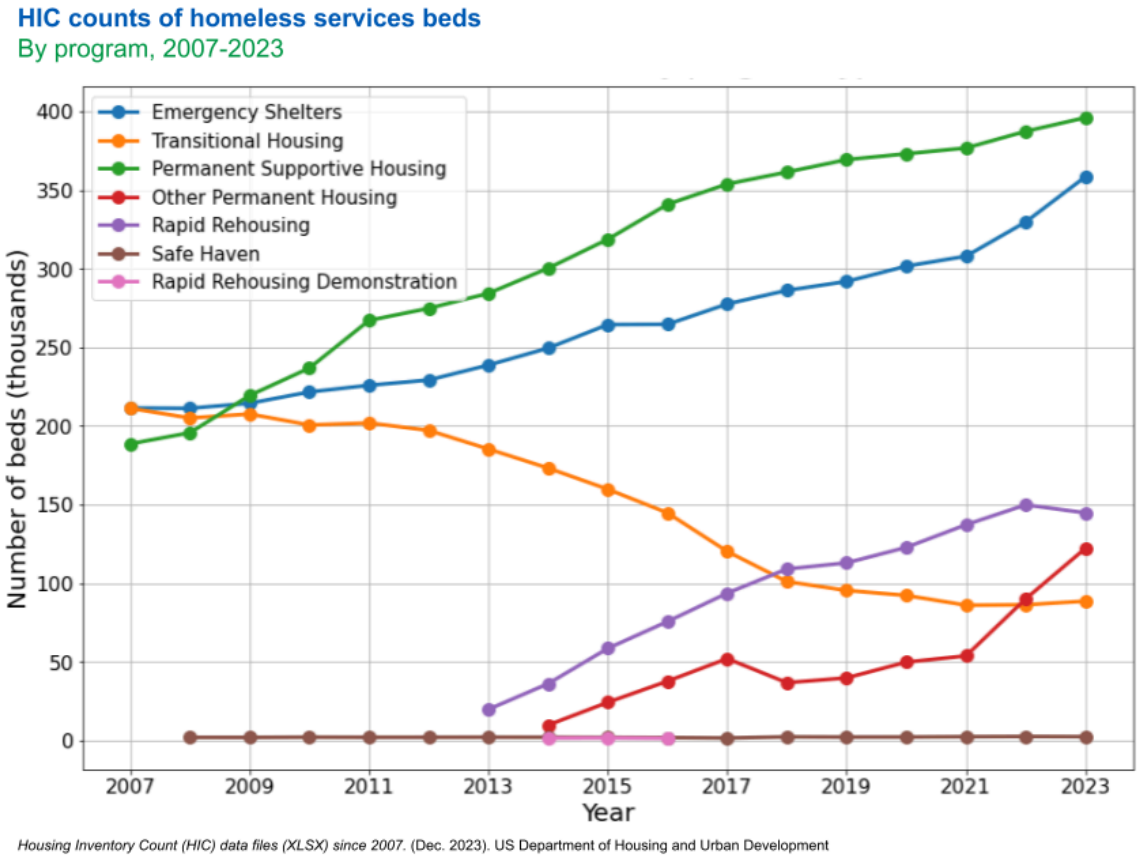


Figure 5: Housing Inventory Counts (HIC) of homeless service beds from 2007-2023. All data pulled from HUD's 2007-2023 HIC counts. The above plot shows trends in homeless service beds by program. In 2009, PSH, ES, and TH each had about the same number of beds. By 2018, PSH and ES have increased by approximately 100,000 and 80,000 beds respectively while TH beds go down by 100,000. Conversely, from 2013-2018, RRH program beds increased by 100,000.

Another influence on this strategic shift was the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, the major component of which was the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program. This combined 3 previous federal grant programs into a single ESG program which interacts with local Continuums of Care across the nation to distribute funds. Continuums of Care (CoCs) are "regional or local planning bod[ies] mandated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that coordinate housing and services

funding for homeless families and individuals" (All Chicago, 2023). HUD can set nationwide program goals and influence local-level actions by controlling the distribution of ESG funds. Included in the 2012 rule are requirements that the next round of funding be used, in part, for RRH programming (HUD, 2011).

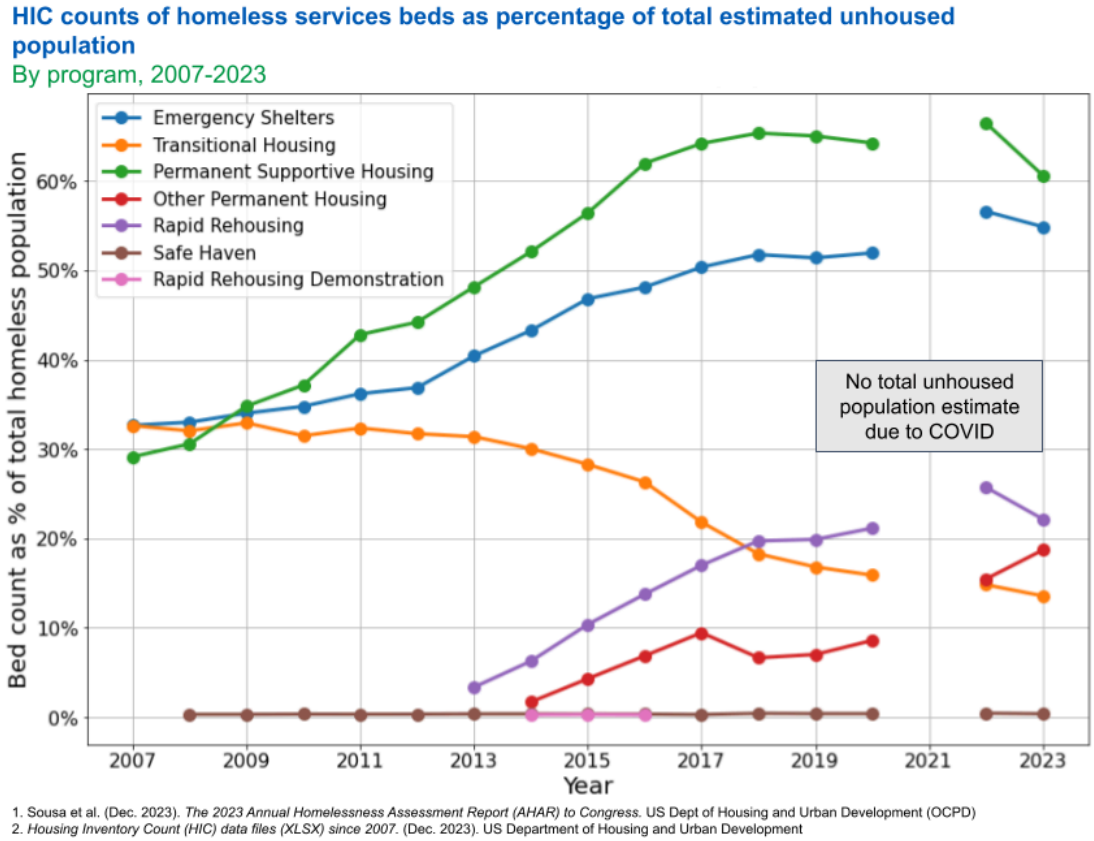


Figure 6: Housing Inventory Counts (HIC) of homeless service beds from 2007-2023 as a percentage of the total unhoused population. All data was pulled from HUD's 2007-2023 HIC and PIT counts. The above plot gives a sense of program beds in relation to the total unhoused population. In 2007, the total number of ES, TH, and PSH beds approximately equaled the total unhoused population. Since then, OPH and RRH beds have come to take the place of TH and increase the national service bed to unhoused population ratio.

While federal homelessness policy from 2007-2014 was defined by the Great Recession, the last decade is defined by COVID-19 response funds. In September of 2020, the CDC released an eviction moratorium order, effectively halting evictions nationwide (CDC, 2021). This order would be extended, albeit in a more limited fashion, twice in response to new surges.

The CDC's concern was that newly evicted persons would either (a) enter homeless shelters, (b) move into lower-cost but higher density housing, or (c) move in with family and/or friends (bunking). All three increase the potential transmission of COVID-19.

Many cities had similar concerns and reduced their ES and TH capacity to tamp down residential density and thus COVID-19 transmission risk (Henry et al., 2022, p. ii). The federal government also distributed $150 billion in flexible funds and $4 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants to city governments via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; many of whom used the funding to address concerns about transmission among unhoused populations (Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, 2020; New York Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, 2020).

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was released in 2021 and, in the spirit of the CARES Act, provides federal funding to tackle the developing fallout of the pandemic. Alongside another $21.6 billion in emergency rental assistance, $10 billion was distributed explicitly to help curtail and address homelessness (Results for America, 2021). Half of this money was targeted at low-income Americans at risk of homelessness in the form of emergency housing vouchers. The other half was distributed to homeless services via the new HOME investment partnership program (Congressional Research Service, 2021). 2022 saw another $43.5 million for 4,000 incremental stability vouchers in the Stability Voucher program (HUD, 2022). Select public housing agencies were granted vouchers based on the assessed homelessness risk of residents with the aim of reducing potential new homelessness during the pandemic.

In total, over $188.3 billion in federal funding has been distributed between 2020-2023 in the form of rental assistance, housing stability aids, and homeless service support. It is also worth

noting that health concerns over dense shelter use caused many large cities like Chicago to shift towards more aggressive RRH programs to reduce transmission (All Chicago, 2023). This funding surge and need to adapt has led to new program outreach and implementation strategies which may be here to stay.

III Methodology & Data

The stated goal of this research is to disaggregate the 12% increase into relevant subpopulation trends. More precisely, beginning with CoC level 2022 and 2023 estimated homeless populations aggregated at the national level, we look to (1) separate the 2022-2023 jump into sheltered and unsheltered components; (2) identify a subset of CoCs which make up most (~50%) of the 2022-2023 sheltered and 2016-2023 unsheltered increases; (3) using supplementary data from CoC reports and city data, estimate the increase in sheltered homelessness that is due to the arrival of asylum seekers; (4) uncover unsheltered demographic changes in CoCs with the largest 2016-2023 unsheltered increase; (5) investigate 2022 CoC reports to identify if the 2022 unsheltered count underestimates the true unsheltered count.

To accomplish the above we pull from myriad data sources to estimate homeless population shifts with as much precision as possible. The main source of CoC level estimates are the 2016, 2022, and 2023 PIT counts by CoC contained within the 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) (HUD, 2023). Each year on the week of January 30th, each CoC around the country conducts both a sheltered and unsheltered survey to estimate their respective unhoused populations. This data includes counts, shelter status, gender and racial demographics, and participation in programs (e.g. PSH, SH, ES, RRH, etc.). While each CoC has a unique methodology and set of limitations, it is worth discussing broad similarities in how CoCs conduct the sheltered and unsheltered estimates.

Sheltered estimates are a survey of people staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens. This estimate is generally considered accurate because of the ease of access surveyors have to target populations and the ability to validate estimates with internal data from sheltered programs. Unsheltered estimates involve a large group of volunteer surveyors who are split into groups and assigned a geographic region of the CoC. Each group of surveyors walks their assigned region and counts the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness they come across. Some CoCs have volunteers speak with people to collect more detailed demographic information, some have surveyors eyeball demographic information, and others conduct a representative survey of those encountered during this search. Unsheltered estimates have more room for error and are subject to methodological constraints due to weather, volunteer recruitment, extrapolation method, geographic sampling, and health concerns (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic).

Another dataset provided with the 2023 AHAR data is the Housing Inventory Counts (HIC) at the CoC level. This is a detailed inventory of the number of beds and units available for ES, TH, SH, RRH, PSH, OPH, and other housing support programs. This is used to examine changes in shelter capacity over time and how it may coincide with population trends among people experiencing homelessness.

A variety of sources were used to estimate the population of asylum seekers living in homeless shelters. As will be seen later, we were able to limit our investigation of asylum seekers experiencing sheltered homelessness to New York City, Chicago, and Denver. Chicago's 2023 PIT count differentiated between non-asylum seekers and asylum seekers, which they define as "individuals and families who left their home country to seek asylum and/or find better opportunities in the United States (US) and arrived in Chicago in need of resettlement assistance

beginning in August 2022" (Nathalie P. Voorhees Center, 2023). In their monthly "New York By the Numbers" report, the NYC office of the Comptroller compiled a chart of the monthly average count of people experiencing homelessness in NYC shelters since February 2016 broken down by whether or not they are asylum seekers (Lander et al., 2024). Their office also provides a simple line plot showing the daily count of asylum seekers staying in city-funded shelter infrastructure. Denver's Office of the Mayor released a PowerBI dashboard targeted for media use which gives the total number of asylum seekers sheltered by Denver each day since December 2022 (Denver Office of the Mayor, 2023).

IV. Results

The major subpopulation trends that make up the 2022-2023 jump can be grouped by geography and sheltered status. 67.76% of the 2022-2023 jump is from an increase in sheltered estimates leaving unsheltered estimates responsible for 32.24%. As can be viewed in Figure 7, this bucks historical trends where changes in total estimated homelessness have followed unsheltered trends. Sheltered homelessness had remained relatively stable up until 2021 with a slow decline since 2014. From 2022-2023 there is a sharp sheltered increase while the 2023 unsheltered estimates are right on trend given the last 7 years of steadily increasing. Due to these differences, we split the investigation into a short-term analysis of the 2022-2023 sheltered spike and a long-term analysis of post-2016 unsheltered trends.

As will be shown in the following sections, the large and acute jump in sheltered estimates is from an influx of South and Central American asylum seekers in New York City, Chicago, and Denver. These three CoCs contributed 53.6%, 5.3%, and 5.2% of the sheltered increase respectively. By our estimates, sheltered newly arrived asylum seekers accounted for, at minimum, 42.46% of the total 2022-2023 increase. Two-thirds of the post-2016 unsheltered

growth has been from West Coast states, with California's unsheltered estimates increasing more than the rest of the country combined. This continued growth in chronic unsheltered homelessness in counties like Los Angeles, Sacramento, the Bay Area, Phoenix, and Seattle is driving the unsheltered trend that accounts for a third of the 2022-2023 total increase.

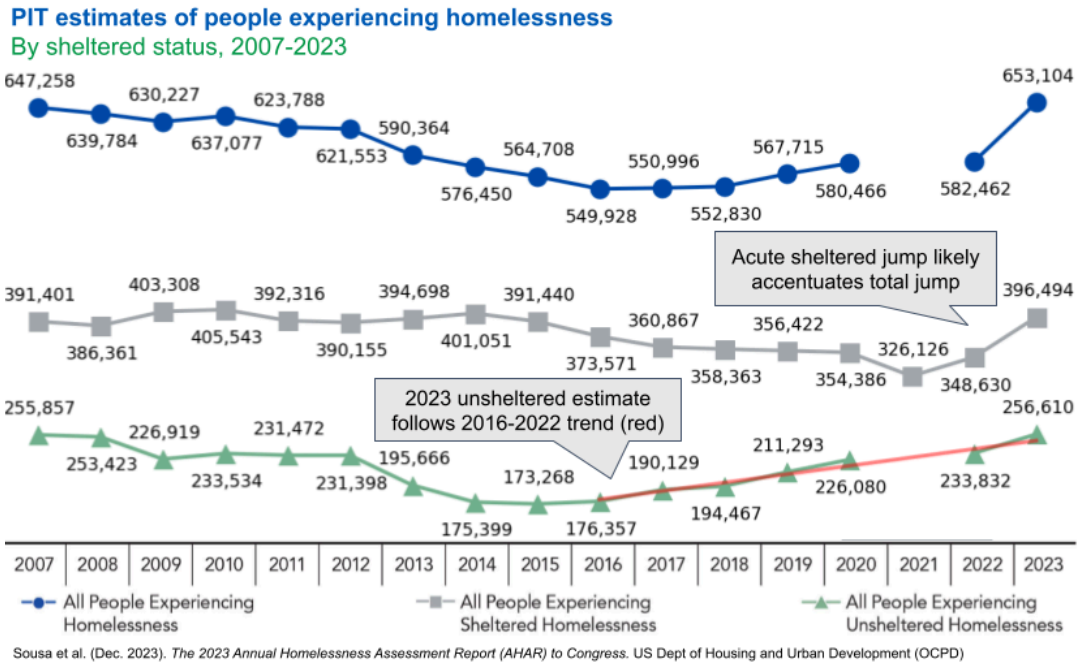


Figure 7: We return to the long-term trends by sheltered status to motivate the separation of sheltered and unsheltered trends in the investigation that follows. The red trendline has been fit to the 2016-2022 unsheltered data and projected to 2023 to show how the unsheltered increase is likely a continuation of the same 7 year trend. The uncharacteristic 2022-2023 spike in total counts is likely driven by the sheltered spike over the same period.

Sheltered Increase

Localizing Sheltered Increase

The arrival of asylum seekers from South and Central America in non-West Coast cities accounted for, at minimum, between 42.46% and 45.35% of the total 2022-2023 increase. This asylum seeker shock primarily affects the New York, Chicago, and Denver CoCs which each contribute 53.6%, 5.3%, and 5.2% of the US sheltered increase and non-coincidentally are the

CoCs with the largest 3 2022-2023 sheltered increases. Removing the minimum estimated effect of asylum seekers in these three cities reduces the 2022-2023 jump from 12.12% to 6.98%.

We begin our investigation by finding which CoCs had the largest 2022-2023 sheltered increases. This is done by subtracting the 2022 from the 2023 sheltered estimates at the CoC level in our AHAR data (Sousa et al., 2023). We then divide by the total US 2022-2023 sheltered increase to get the CoC level contributions to said sheltered increase. The contribution calculation for CoC i in the set of all CoCs C can be seen below.

$$contribution_{i,\,sheltered} = 100 * \frac{sheltered_{i,\,2023} - sheltered_{i,\,2022}}{\sum_{j \in C} (sheltered_{j,\,2023} - sheltered_{j,\,2022})}$$

It is important to show just how skewed the distribution of CoC sheltered increases is. Figure 8 displays the contribution of all CoCs in the contiguous US to the 2022-2023 sheltered increase. As can be seen, New York City dominates the distribution being responsible for over half of the sheltered jump. By removing New York City from the map in Figure 9, we can identify Denver, Chicago, and Massachusetts BoS CoCs as outliers in terms of their contributions to the sheltered increase. That said, they combined only account for 12.6%, less than a quarter of New York's contribution.

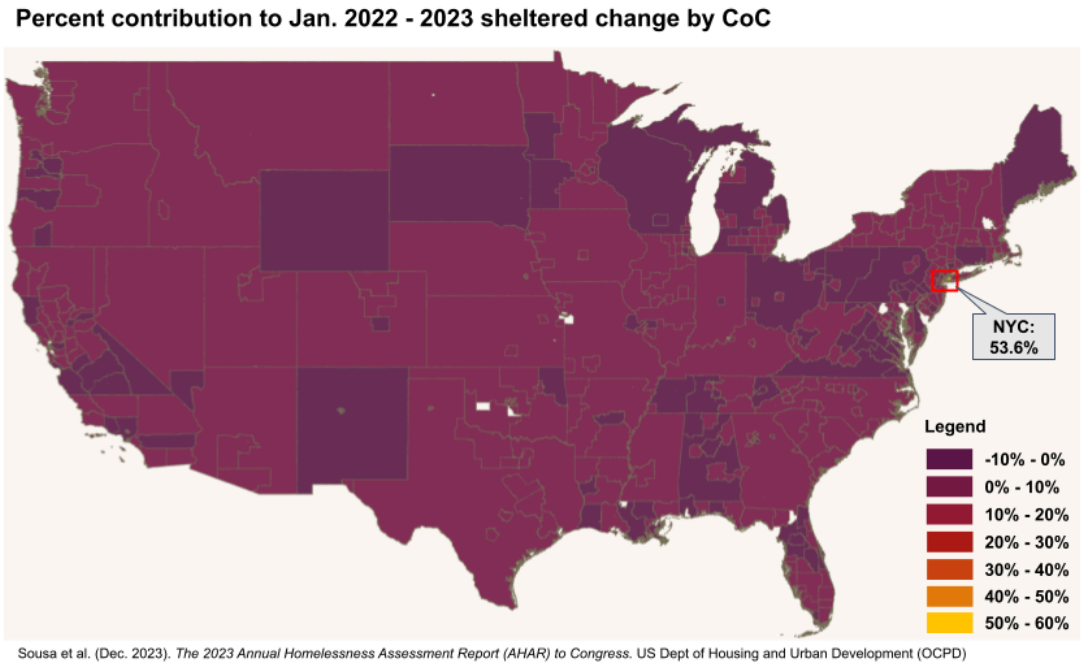


Figure 8: Above is the geographic distribution of sheltered change. Each CoC, cut out in their corresponding territory on the map, is colored according to the percentage of the 2022-2023 sheltered increase their estimates contributed to. The brighter the CoC coloring the higher its contribution. New York City's extreme outlier contribution of 53.6% stretches out the label range such that the remaining CoCs are compressed into two colors.

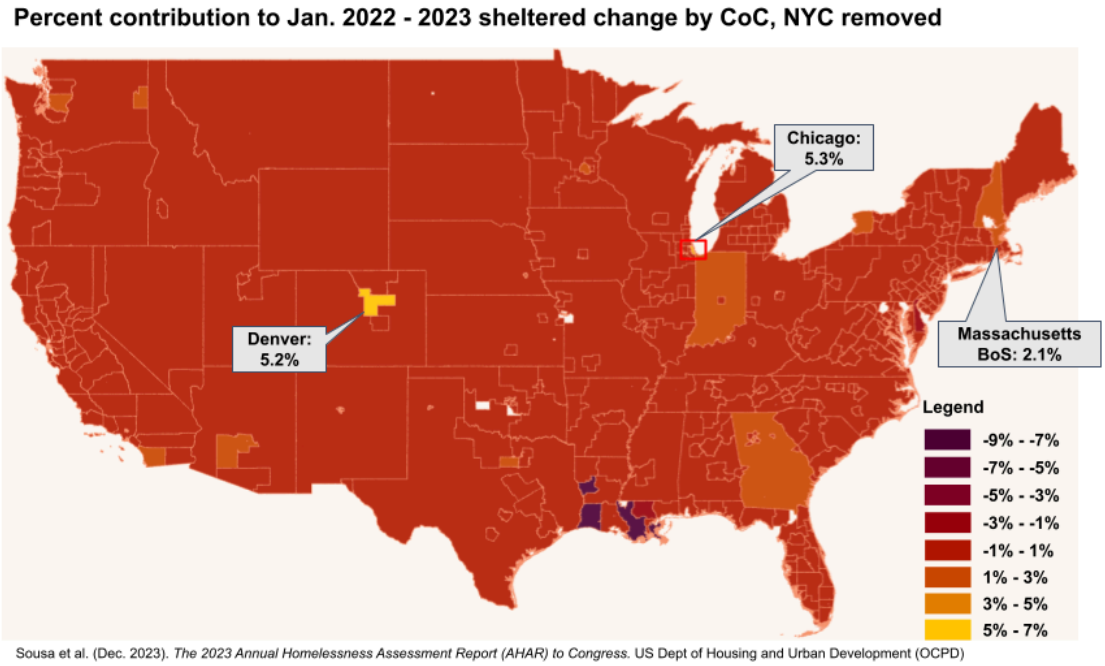


Figure 9: Similar to Figure 8, this map colors each CoC region by their contribution to the 2022-2023 sheltered increase. New York City has been removed so smaller differences between CoCs can be visualized. Denver, Chicago, Boston Balance of State (BoS), and Louisiana BoS all stand out as outliers while the rest of the country's smaller contributions. Louisiana's dramatic reduction is due to the end of FEMA-funded shelters to house victims of Hurricane Ida in 2021 (Sousa et al., 2023, pg. 23).

Details of the 4 CoCs that contributed the most to the sheltered increase are summarized below in figure 10. The columns detailing their raw and relative changes in sheltered estimates are highlighted in yellow. These 4 CoCs combined account for 66.3% of the entire sheltered jump. Now armed with the geographic distribution, we turn to the distinct increase in Hispanic sheltered individuals.

CoC Name	Pop. Change: All Unhoused	% Change in CoC: All Unhoused	Pop. Change: Sheltered	% Change in CoC: Sheltered	Pop. Change: Unsheltered	% Change in CoC: Unsheltered
New York City	26,185	42.3%	25,555	43.8%	630	18.2%
Chicago	2,264	58.4%	2,537	97.1%	-273	-21.6%
Metropolitan Denver	3,170	46.0%	2,485	51.7%	685	33.0%
Massachusetts BoS	1,197	37.0%	1,012	35.0%	185	61.3%
Top 4 Combined	32,816	% of US Δ: Unhoused	31,589	% of US Δ: Sheltered	1,227	% of US Δ: Unsheltered
		45.8%		66.3%		5.1%

Note: Δ refers to change in US homeless population estimates between January 2022-2023

Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)

Figure 10: The 4 CoCs with the highest sheltered estimate increase between January 2022-2023. The highlighted columns give the count increase and the relative change for each CoC. New York City stands out for having around five times the increase of Chicago, Denver, and MA BoS combined while Chicago has the highest relative increase with the near doubling of their sheltered population. It is worth noting that all of these CoCs had small unsheltered populations relative to their sheltered estimates the prior year.

Acute Hispanic Sheltered Increase

In looking across the AHAR PIT data for New York, Chicago, and Denver, it became clear that there was a large increase in the number of people who identified as Hispanic. Figure 11 shows the percentage of the unhoused population that is categorized as Hispanic by sheltered status. From 2016-2020, the percentage of sheltered, unsheltered, and total remained constant at

around 21.5% Hispanic. There are no comprehensive unsheltered or total estimates for 2021 due to COVID-19, but we see the unsheltered percentage has increased between 2020 and 2022 from 23.5% to 26.3%. Our period of interest is the change between 2022 and 2023, where we see the percentage of the sheltered population categorized as Hispanic jump from 22.6% to 28.4%, an uncharacteristic 5.88 point increase after years of consistency. The total unhoused estimate in blue is dragged up by this sheltered jump.

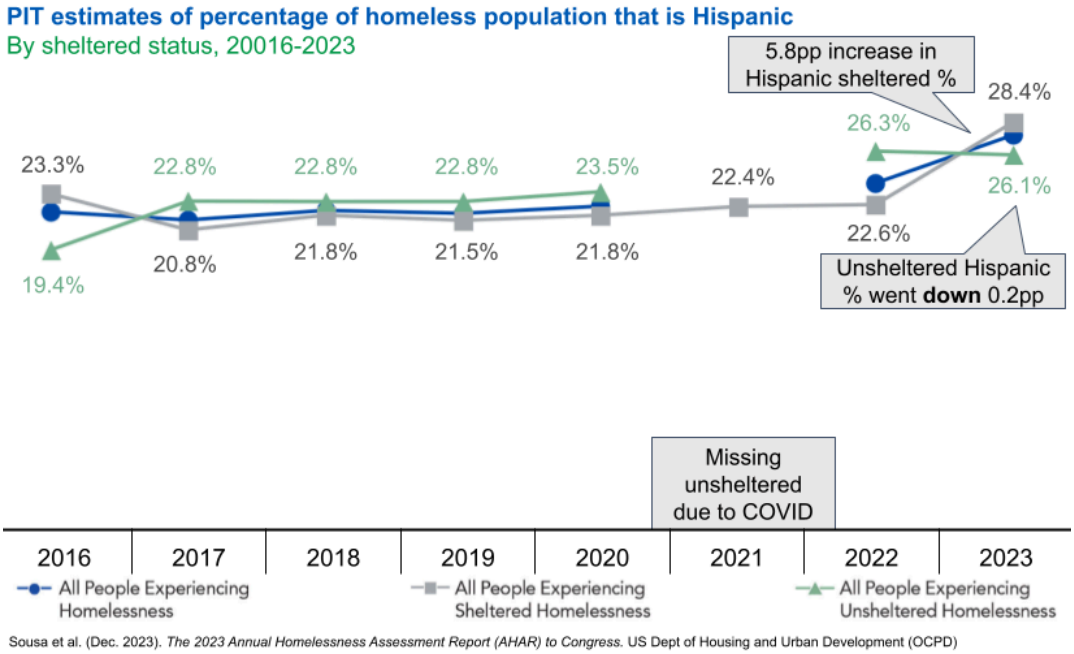


Figure 11: This plot shows the percentage of the estimated homeless population that is categorized as Hispanic for 2016-2023. Things remain relatively constant over this period until 2020-2022 when the unsheltered percentage increases from 23.5% to 26.3%. Between 2022 and 2023, the unsheltered percentage goes down slightly while the sheltered percent Hispanic increases an uncharacteristic 5.8 points to 28.4%.

Assuming the percent Hispanic would remain constant between 2022 and 2023 in the absence of shocks, we can project what the expected Hispanic increase would be between 2022-2023. For each sheltered status, we take the 2022-2023 increase (Δ_{status}) and multiply it by

the 2022 percent Hispanic ($p_{Hispanic,\,2022}$). For example, in the absence of major demographic changes, we would expect 22.6% of the 2022-2023 sheltered increase to be Hispanic.

$$\Delta_{expected,\,status} = \Delta_{status} * p_{Hispanic,\,2022}$$

The resulting calculations indicate there was a massive influx of people identifying as Hispanic entering the sheltered system between 2022-2023. Figure 12 displays the difference between the expected and observed Hispanic increases alongside the total increase by sheltered status. The unsheltered Hispanic increase is both relatively small and not far from the expected. The sheltered Hispanic increase, on the other hand, is 312.2% larger than the expected and represents 70.6% of the entire sheltered increase.

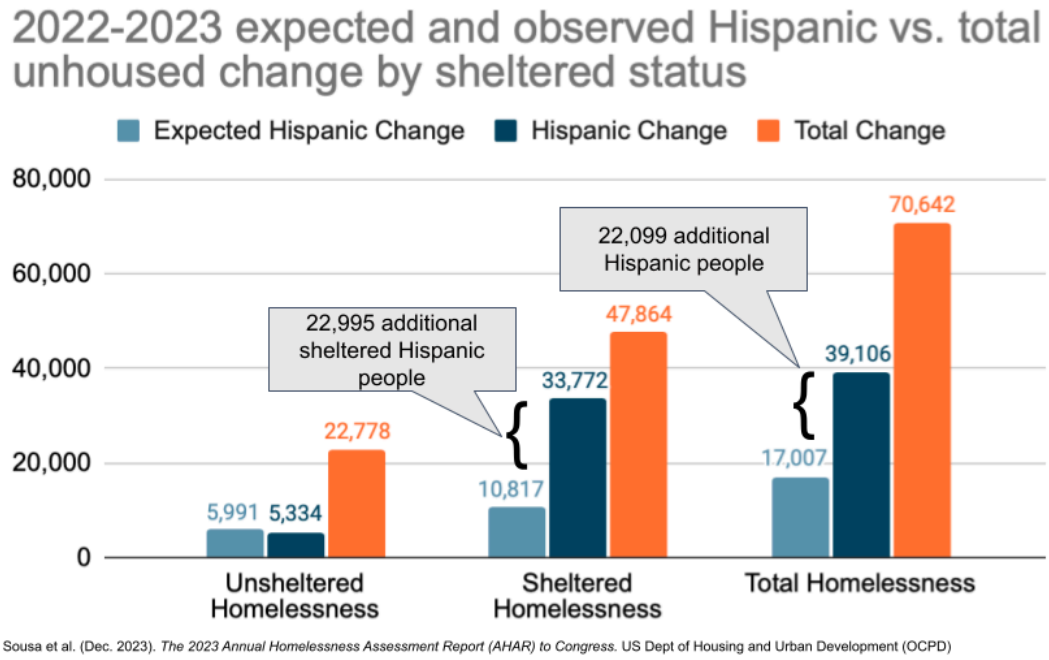


Figure 12: The above plot shows side-by-side comparisons of the expected Hispanic 2022-2023 change, observed Hispanic change, and total change for each shelter status. Expected change was calculated by multiplying the total changes by the corresponding 2022 sheltered status percent Hispanic from Figure 11. The unsheltered increase does not deviate from the expected while the observed sheltered and total Hispanic changes are 312.2% and 230% larger than their respective expected values.

The Asylum Seeker Effect

The 2023 AHAR report notes that asylum seekers (AS) account for 80% of New York City's sheltered increase and that an unnamed Colorado CoC saw the arrival of approximately 1,500 AS shortly before the PIT count commenced (Sousa et al., 2023, pg. 23). Chicago's 2023 PIT report opens by highlighting the arrival of over 2,000 AS (Nathalie P. Voorhees Center, 2023, pg. 3). All three note the asylum seekers are primarily from Latin American countries and were being placed in emergency Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shelters, which would explain both the large increase in Hispanic individuals and their concentration in shelters.

Using data from the New York City Comptroller, the Denver Office of the Mayor, and the Chicago 2023 PIT count, we were able to estimate the impact of AS arrivals between January 2022 and January 2023 on the estimated sheltered increases in each city (Lander et al, 2024; Denver Mayor's Office, 2023; Nathalie P. Voorhees Center, 2023). The Chicago sheltered asylum seeker estimate comes directly from the Chicago 2023 PIT count, which separately reported the increase in asylum seekers and their demographics (Nathalie P. Voorhees Center, 2023). There are two estimates presented for both NYC and Denver based on different data sources.

As previously mentioned, the 2023 AHAR discusses the arrival of approximately 1,500 asylum seekers the week before the PIT count in an unidentified Colorado county (Sousa et al, 2023). A quick look through the AHAR data reveals that the only CoC in Colorado with a 2022-2023 Hispanic increase equal, or even close to, 1,500 is the metropolitan Denver CoC, so we can reasonably assume this 1,500 increase was counted there. This acts as our upper-bound estimate for the asylum seeker effect in the Denver CoC.

The city of Denver, in response to growing press interest in the asylum seeker increase, released a PowerBI dashboard that displays the daily count of asylum seekers in metropolitan Denver shelters (Denver Mayor's Office, 2023). This dashboard does not present counts from before December 1st, 2022 but the total on that date is 3 people and the count is trending rapidly towards zero so an assumption can be made there was no noteworthy asylum seeker presence before then. This dashboard, as of March 2024, reported 1,018 asylum seekers being sheltered on January 30th, the start of the week when the PIT count takes place.

The New York City Office of the Comptroller provides two different views of sheltered asylum seeker counts. The first larger estimate comes from an interactive plot displaying the daily asylum seeker population in city-funded shelters on a comptroller report titled "Accounting for Asylum Seeker Services" (Office of the NYC Comptroller, 2024). As of March 2023, reported 28,370 asylum seekers staying in city-funded shelters on January 30, 2023. Similar to the Denver dashboard the data does not present estimates from as early as January 2022 but trends toward zero as we approach the earliest reporting date, so we make a similar assumption that there was no significant asylum seeker population being sheltered in January 2022.

The lower New York estimate comes from a chart in the Office of the Comptroller's 2024 "New York By the Numbers" report (Lander et al, 2024). Chart 6 shows the average number of people in city shelters each month from February 2016 to January 2024. That said, they only break out asylum seekers in the months after September 2022. Seeing as we are interested in the asylum seeker difference between January 2022 and 2023, we make a conservative estimate by only counting the total number of people identified as asylum seekers staying in city shelters in January 2023. Note that the totals presented in this source are a monthly average rather than a date-specific total. Another potential method would be taking the difference between the January

2022 and 2023 counts but this would assume the difference is entirely from asylum seekers and give a higher estimate. Taking the 2023 asylum seeker count gives us a more conservative lower-bound estimate of 26,802 to contrast the more precise and high estimate from the "Accounting for Asylum Seeker Services" data.

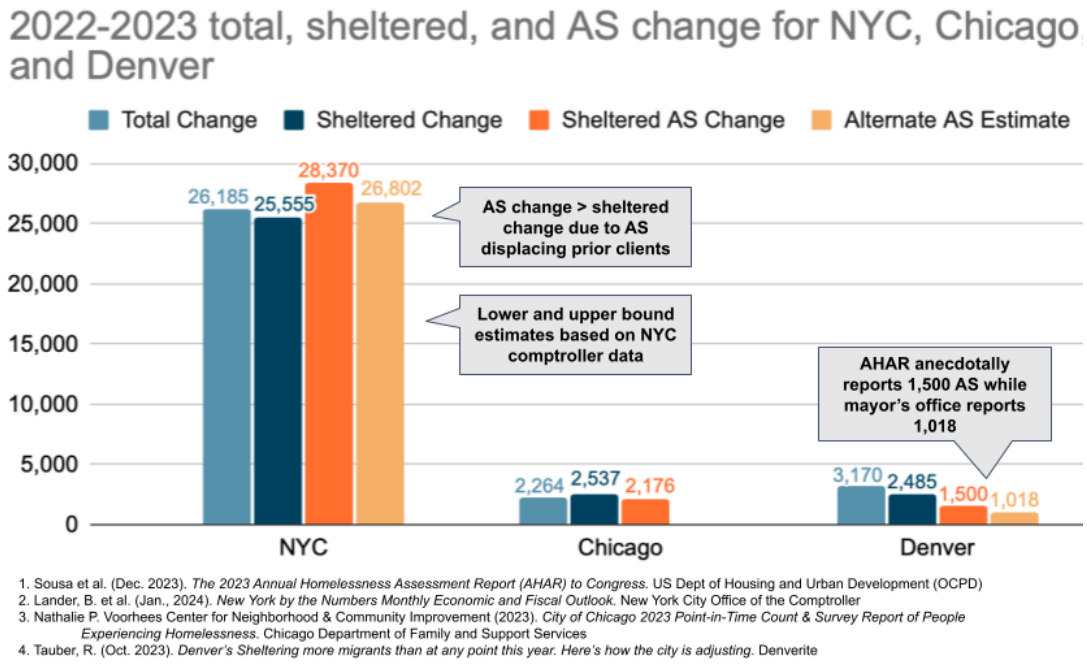


Figure 13: The above bar chart compares the total (light blue), sheltered (dark blue), and asylum seeker (orange, yellow) January 2022-2023 jumps for New York City, Chicago, and Denver. It can be seen that the arrival of AS accounts for all of NYC, 96.1% of Chicago, and between 32.1% - 47.3% of Denver's total jumps. The orange and yellow estimates for NYC and Denver present upper and lower-bound estimates based on different data sources.

Figure 13 above compares the total, sheltered, and estimated asylum seeker changes between January 2022 and 2023 for the 3 CoCs with the largest sheltered increases over that period. As can be seen, the sheltered asylum seeker change in NYC is greater than the total change, indicating that there was a decrease in the number of non-asylum seekers estimated to be homeless. In Chicago, sheltered asylum seekers were 96.1% of the total 2022-2023 increase and, in Denver, they were between 32.1%-47.3%. We can sum these 3 CoC sheltered asylum seeker estimates, choosing the lower estimates for both New York and Denver, to get a minimum asylum seeker effect on the 2023 PIT counts of other CoCs across the country. Figure 14 below

shows the effect of such an adjustment to our 2022-2023 trend by removing it from the sheltered and total lines.

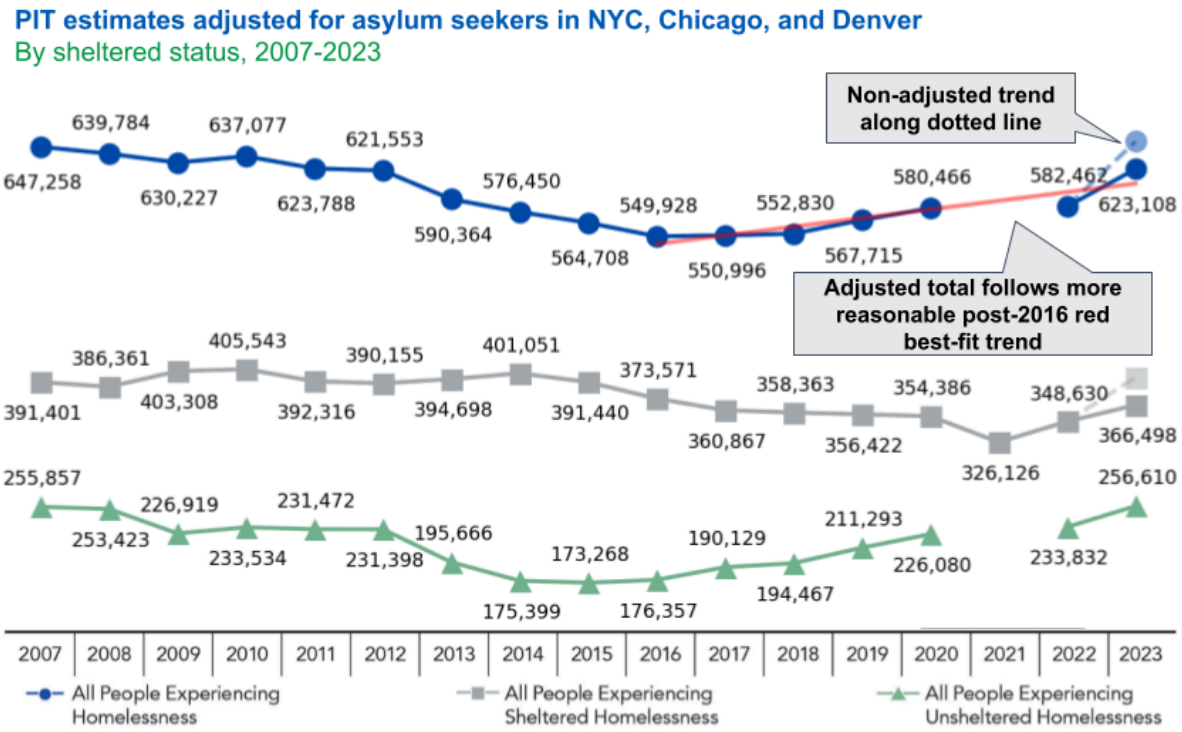


Figure 14: This plot displays the US trends in estimated homelessness by sheltered status with the original 2022-2023 total and sheltered trends along the faded dashed line. The solid lines represent the 2022-2023 trend with the minimum estimated effect of sheltered asylum seekers in NYC, Chicago, and Denver removed. Removing this effect we see the 2022-2023 increase go from 12.12% to 6.98%, a 42.4% reduction. The linear red trendline is fit to the 2016-2023 total unhoused estimates and shows how the adjusted total trend more reasonably follows the 2010-2022 data.

Summing the sheltered asylum seeker effect across the three CoCs, we get the minimum estimated asylum seeker effect to be between 29,996 and 32,046 people out of a total 2022-2023 increase of 70,642 people. These estimates represent 42.46% and 45.36% of the total increase respectively. The red trendline is fitted to the total unhoused population estimates for 2016-2023 to show how the asylum seeker adjusted 2023 estimate is more in line with what we would expect the 2022-2023 increase to be. There is a strong argument that the asylum seekers in just

these 3 CoCs accounted for 45.36% of the 2022-2023 change, so the full asylum seeker effect is likely to have nearly doubled the 2022-2023 total increase.

Unsheltered Increase

Having adjusted the sheltered and total trends for our minimum estimated asylum seeker effect, it is time to turn to the unsheltered portion of the 2022-2023 increase. As can be seen in Figure 15 below, the adjusted 2016-2023 total trend roughly follows and is slightly less aggressive than the unsheltered growth trend. We also observe that the 2023 unsheltered estimate closely aligns with the projected 2023 estimate following the red trendline fit to the 2016-2022 estimates. All of this is to say the unsheltered portion of the 2022-2023 increase is best understood as the continuation of a 7 year growth trend.

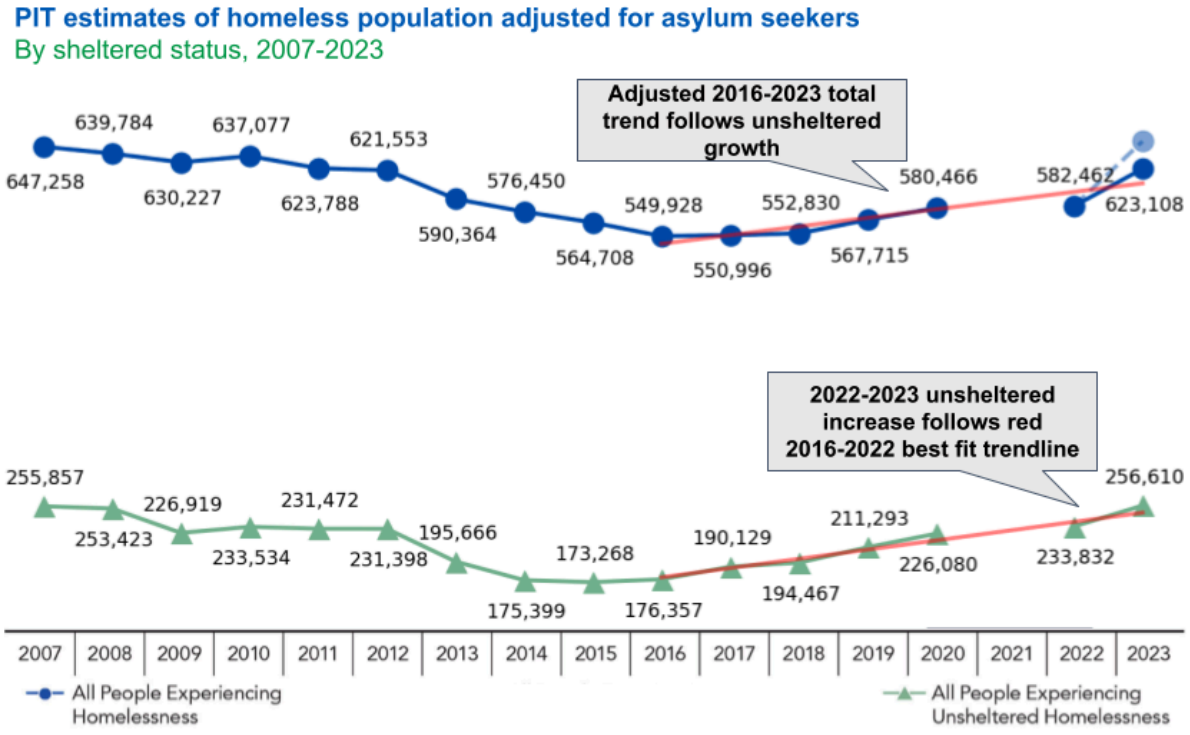


Figure 15: This time series gives a comparison of the post-2016 trends in asylum seeker adjusted total and unsheltered estimates. The red trendline for the total population is fit to the 2016-2023 asylum seeker adjusted estimates and shows that the 2022-2023 increase is more in line with what would be an expected increase when the effect of asylum seekers is removed. The unsheltered red trendline is fit to the 2016-2022 estimates and then projected to 2023 to show how the 2023 unsheltered estimate is in line with the last 7 years of growth.

The following section will localize this trend to the West Coast states of California, Oregon, and Washington, with a particular emphasis on California. These 3 states make up for two-thirds of the total US unsheltered increase between 2016 and 2023 while the rest of the US contributions quickly fall off. Next, the Californian increase is localized at the regional and CoC level and then broken down by key demographics to characterize the unsheltered population and open questions for further research.

State Localization of Unsheltered Increase

The analysis that follows leverages the following data sources. (1) The AHAR 2023 reports at CoC level which provide subpopulation estimates as reported by every CoC; (2) CoC PIT reports written by the organizers of the PIT count in each CoC that provide descriptions of methodologies and interpretations of observed trends; (3) US Census Department projected state populations for 2016-2023 based on the decennial census.

Similar to localizing the 2022-2023 sheltered increase, we calculate the change in unsheltered populations by subtracting the 2016 from the 2023 estimates. These changes are normalized by the total US unsheltered population change over the same period to give a contribution percentage. The unsheltered contribution calculation for CoC i in set of all CoCs C can be seen below.

$$contribution_{i,\,unsheltered} = 100 * \frac{unsheltered_{i,\,2023} - unsheltered_{i,\,2016}}{\sum_{j \in C} (unsheltered_{j,\,2023} - unsheltered_{j,\,2016})}$$

We aggregate changes at the US census region, state, state region, and CoC level to identify where in the nation is contributing the most to the unsheltered growth trend. Lastly, we

use the AHAR data to identify changes in the percentage of the unsheltered population that is classified as unaccompanied youth, chronically homeless, in a family unit, and a veteran.

We begin by examining the 2016-2023 unsheltered contributions aggregated at the US census region level as seen in Figure 16. The unsheltered increase is strongly clustered in the Western states. California, Oregon, and Washington have a combined contribution of 67.65% while the next highest is the Mountain region at 10.45%. West South Central is the other noteworthy region but, as will be examined later, this is primarily driven by the Texas BoS CoC.

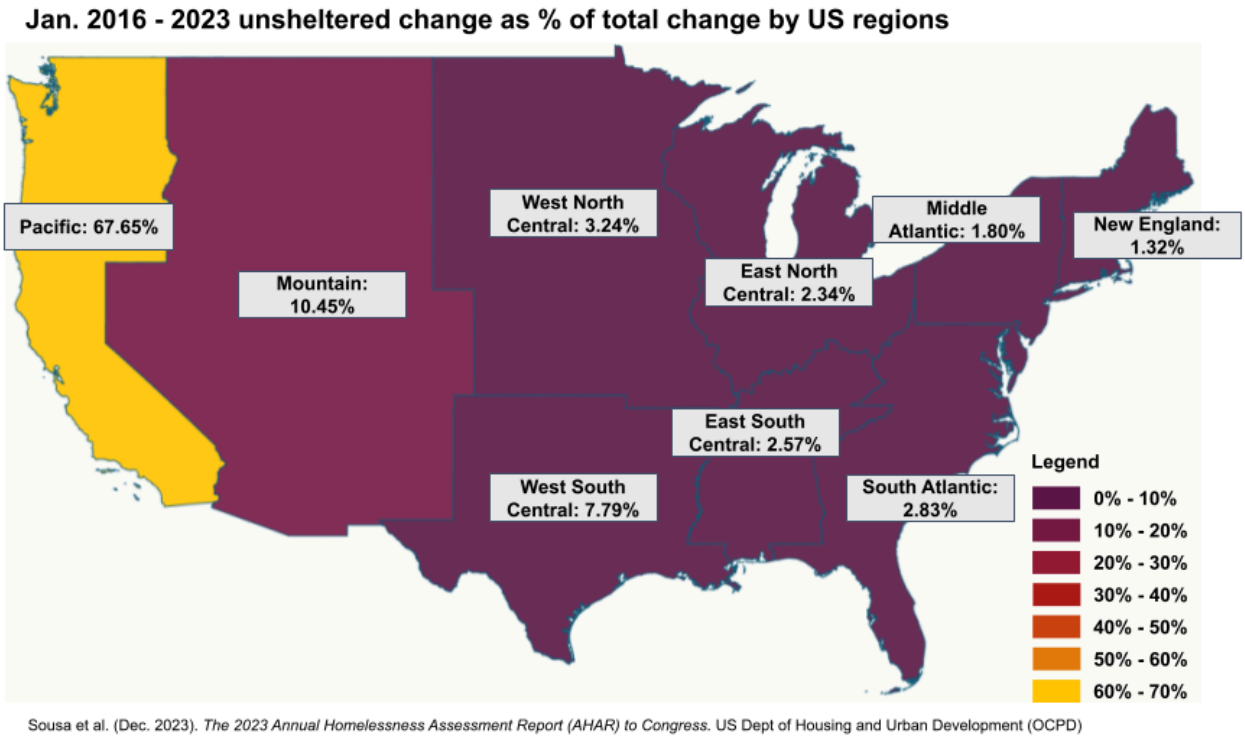
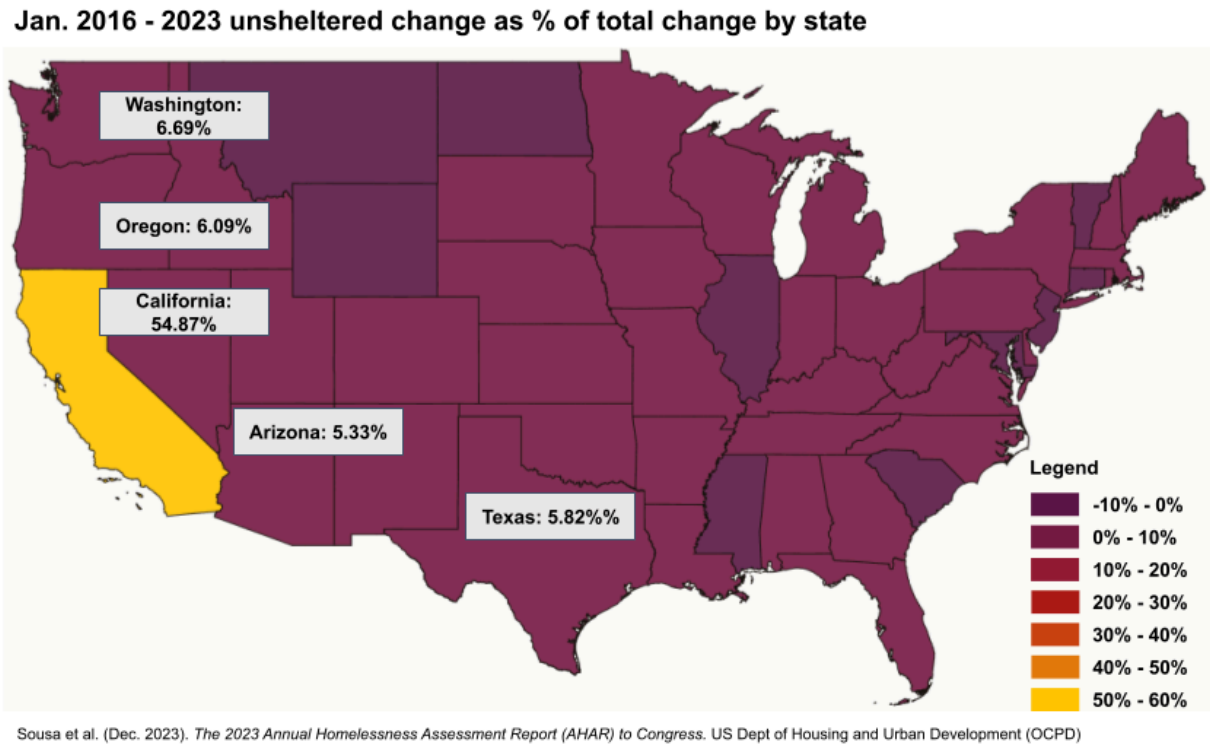


Figure 16: The 2016-2023 unsheltered change percent contribution by US census region. Each region is color-coded so brighter colors indicate higher change contribution. The US West, defined as the Mountain and Pacific regions, contributes 78.1% of the total US unsheltered change. That said, the majority of the contribution is clustered along the West Coast in the Pacific region.

The next step is breaking these regional changes down to the state level. As is revealed by Figure 17, the Pacific, Mountain, and West South Central regions get over half of their contributions from California, Arizona, and Texas respectively. California's contribution is striking, accounting for more than the rest of the country combined. California is, as of 2023, the

most populous state in the United States so it is expected to have a large number but, as will be shown, the West Coast states have the highest level of per capita unsheltered homelessness and the largest 2016-2023 increase in per capita unsheltered homelessness.



Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)

Figure 17: This view presents the 2016-2023 unsheltered increase by state, with brighter colors indicating a larger contribution percentage. California dominates with a larger 2016-2023 increase than the rest of the United States combined. The labeled states all have > 5% contribution, the 7th largest is Colorado at 2.2% and by the 14th placement onwards the contributions are < 1%.

The table in Figure 18 presents the states with the largest rate of unsheltered homelessness increases between 2016 and 2023 while Figure 19 shows the states with the largest 2023 rates of unsheltered homelessness. Save for Nevada and New Mexico, the set of states with the largest rate increase also have the highest 2023 rates of homelessness. California and Oregon top both categories, with California having the highest per capita rate and the largest 2016-2023 increase. For another view of changes in unsheltered homelessness relative to state population shifts, Figure 20 displays a map where each state is colored by the 2016-2023 unsheltered change

normalized by the state's population change over the same period. This calculation follows the below formula where i refers to state i out of the set of states S.

$$\delta_{unsheltered,\, normalized} = 100 * \frac{unsheltered_{2023} - unsheltered_{2016}}{population_{2023} - population_{2016}}$$

State	Unsheltered Per 1,000 in 2016	Unsheltered Per 1,000 in 2023	Change in Unsheltered Per 1,000	% Change in Unsheltered Per 1,000
California	2.001	3.168	1.166	58.26%
Oregon	1.956	3.072	1.115	57.01%
Washington D.C.	0.464	1.215	0.751	162.05%
Washington	1.161	1.786	0.625	53.88%
Arizona	0.467	1.025	0.557	119.25%
New Mexico	0.217	0.757	0.54	248.63%
Colorado	0.531	0.807	0.277	52.15%

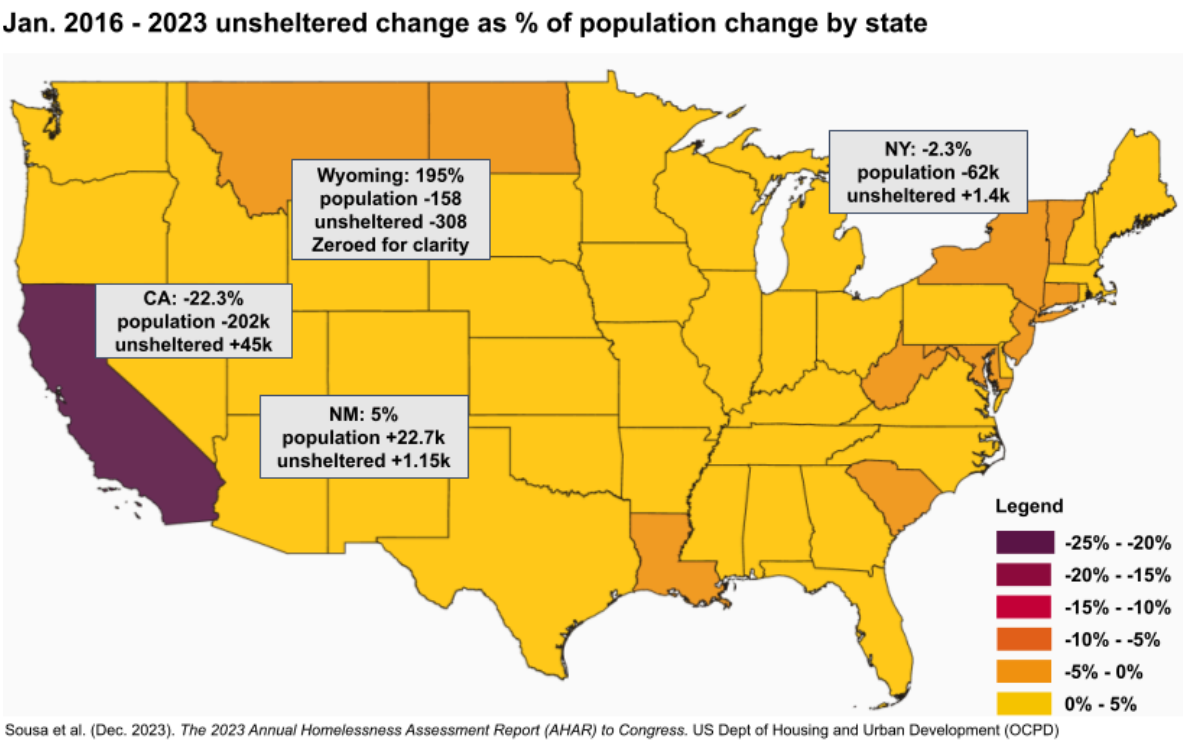
1. Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)
2. *State Population Totals and Components of Change: 2010-2019* (2021). United States Census Bureau
3. *State Population Totals and Components of Change: 2020-2023* (2023). United States Census Bureau

Figure 18: The above table shows the states with the highest change in per capita rates of unsheltered homelessness between 2016 and 2023. Each year's per capita rate is defined as $1,000 * population_{unsheltered} / population_{total}$. *The West Coast states of California, Oregon, and Washington are in the top 4 with D.C., which has more volatile per capita rates due to its small (~700k) population.*

State	Unsheltered Estimate 2016	Total Pop. 2016	Unsheltered Per 1,000 in 2016	Unsheltered Estimate 2023	Total Pop. 2023	Unsheltered Per 1,000 in 2023
California	78,390	39.18M	2.00	123,423	38.97M	3.17
Oregon	8,002	4.09M	1.96	13,004	4.23M	3.07
Washington	8,466	7.29M	1.16	13,953	7.81M	1.79
Nevada	3,927	2.92M	1.35	4,555	3.19M	1.43
Washington D.C.	318	0.69M	0.46	825	0.68M	1.22
Arizona	3,244	6.94M	0.47	7,615	7.43M	1.02
Colorado	2,939	5.54M	0.53	4,745	5.88M	0.81

1. Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)
2. *State Population Totals and Components of Change: 2010-2019* (2021). United States Census Bureau
3. *State Population Totals and Components of Change: 2020-2023* (2023). United States Census Bureau

Figure 19: This view shows the 7 states with the highest 2023 rates of unsheltered homelessness. The West Coast states, which have had the largest unsheltered estimates, unsheltered increases, and per capita rate increases, intuitively have the highest 2023 rates of unsheltered homelessness.



Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)

Figure 20: The above map colors states by their 2016-2023 change in unsheltered homelessness normalized by the change in state population, effectively returning the change in unsheltered estimates as a percentage of the change in population. Wyoming had a 195% change due to small values so the state is zeroed out for clarity. The largest

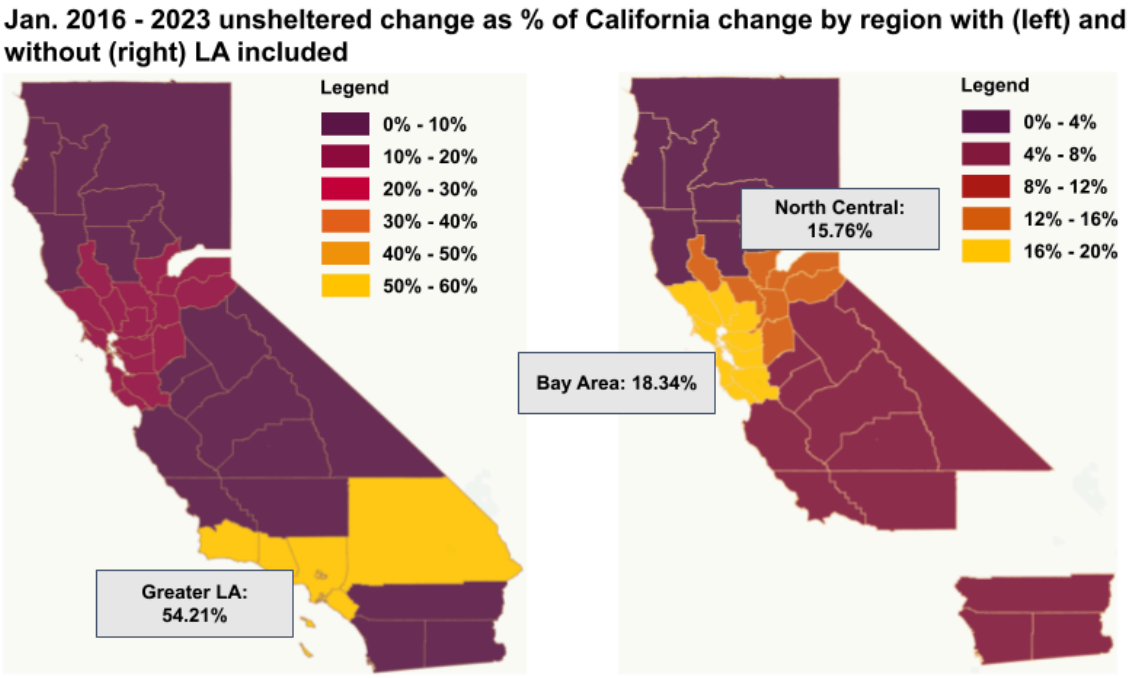
positive percentage was New Mexico. California had the largest magnitude percentage due to its significant unsheltered population increase and slightly declining population.

Given the dominance of California across multiple measures of absolute and relative unsheltered homeless population change, and how quickly the remaining US unsheltered change is diffused across other states, it is the focus of the following section. We further localize unsheltered changes to metropolitan Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and Sacramento before investigating demographic shifts among the selected unsheltered population.

California Localization of Unsheltered Increase

Below are a series of maps and tables that present, with increasing granularity, the percent contribution regions made to California's 2016-2023 unsheltered increase. We again define percent contribution as the percentage of total Californian change made up by the localized region's change. Ultimately, the largest national contributions are from Los Angeles (24.33%), Sacramento (7.12%), Berkeley / Alameda County (5.9%), and San Jose / Santa Clara County (3.46%) which together account for 40.81% of the entire US unsheltered increase. While Los Angeles has by far the largest increase in the nation (+195k people), Sacramento has had the largest relative increase at +603% since 2016.

As can be seen in looking between Figures 22 and 23, Sacramento accounts for 80.9% of the North Central region's increase. The mapping of Sacramento to North Central inflates the region's measures to be just below the Bay Area in terms of contribution. Sacramento's increase is larger than any CoC in the Bay Area and has an increase that is 69.5% of the entire Bay Area's. In the next section, we will be looking at changes in demographics among the unsheltered populations in the Californian CoCs with the largest increases.



Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)

Figure 21: The above map shows the percent contribution different regions made to California's total 2016-2023 unsheltered change. The left displays the data inclusive of Greater LA and the right removes this outlier to allow for more expressiveness. Borders are drawn for CoCs but colored based on region assignment. For a full list of regions see Figure 22.

CA Sub-Region	Unsheltered Homeless 2016	Unsheltered Homeless 2023	Change in Unsheltered	% Contribution to CA Unsheltered Change	% Contribution to US Unsheltered Change
Greater LA	39,760	64,049	24,289	54.21%	29.59%
Bay Area	18,275	26,494	8,219	18.34%	10.01%
North Central	3,122	10,183	7,061	15.76%	8.60%
Central	7,319	9,552	2,233	4.98%	2.72%
Greater San Diego	6,543	8,758	2,215	4.94%	2.70%
Northern	3,371	4,160	789	1.76%	0.96%

Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)

Figure 22: The above table details the data displayed in Figure 21. For each region, the aggregate totals for unsheltered homeless in 2016 and 2023, change in unsheltered estimates, and percent contributions to California and national unsheltered 2016-2023 change are displayed. Greater LA had a larger change that the rest of California combined. As can be seen in Figure 23, North Central's high numbers are nearly entirely driven by Sacramento.

CA CoC	CA Sub-Region	Unsheltered Homeless 2016	Unsheltered Homeless 2023	Change in Unsheltered	% Contribution to CA Unsheltered Change	% Contribution to US Unsheltered Change
Los Angeles	Greater LA	32,781	52,307	19,526	43.58%	24.33%
Sacramento	North Central	948	6,664	5,716	12.76%	7.12%
Oakland, Berkeley / Alameda	Bay Area	2,397	7,135	4,738	10.57%	5.90%
San Jose / Santa Clara	Bay Area	4,627	7,401	2,774	6.19%	3.46%
San Bernardino	Greater LA	1,191	2,976	1,785	3.98%	2.22%
Fresno / Madera	Central	1,431	2,758	1,327	2.96%	1.65%

Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)

Figure 23: The above table shows the same attributes as Figure 22 but at the CoC level with the addition of naming the region each CoC belongs to. The Californian CoCs listed are those with the largest 2016-2023 unsheltered increase. Conveniently, this list shows the CoCs that primarily drive each relevant region.

Californian Unsheltered Demographic Shifts

The following tables summarize shifts in the demographics experiencing unsheltered homelessness in California regions and key CoCs. We first present a list of the measures we examine. Overall, we observe shelter services unable to keep up with rapidly rising homelessness, causing spillover into an increasingly unsheltered population. The strain on services is also evident with the rise of chronic homelessness, indicating more and more of the homeless population are staying homeless for longer than a year or having many repeat long-term episodes of homelessness.

1) **Homeless Δ in % unsheltered** — the change, between 2016 and 2023, in the percentage of the total unhoused population that is experiencing unsheltered homelessness as opposed to sheltered homelessness.

2) **Unsheltered Δ in % unaccompanied under 25** — the change, between 2016 and 2023, in the percentage of unsheltered young people under the age of 25 who, during the current episode of homelessness, are not a part of a family with children or accompanied by a parent or guardian.
3) **Unsheltered Δ in % families** — the change, between 2016 and 2023, in the percentage of unsheltered people in households with at least one adult over 18 and one child under 18.
4) **Unsheltered Δ in % chronic** — the change, between 2016 and 2023, in the percentage of unsheltered people classified as chronic (see chronic definition in section II).
5) **Unsheltered chronic Δ in % in families** — the change, between 2016 and 2023, in the percentage of unsheltered people classified as chronic who are in families.
6) **Unsheltered Δ in % veterans** — the change, between 2016 and 2023, in the percentage of unsheltered people who are US veterans.

Sacramento, in line with the large unsheltered increase they are experiencing, has seen its unhoused population go from 37.92% to 71.80% unsheltered. This implies their shelter infrastructure and programming have been unable to keep up with the rapidly growing homeless population. Their unsheltered population is staying homeless for a long time, as the percentage of people who are chronically homeless has increased to a staggering 50.63%. Los Angeles is also following suit and has seen the chronic percentage of its unsheltered population increase by 12.58pp to end at 51.65% in 2023. In both these counties, half of all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness either have a disability and have been homeless for over a year or do

not have a disability and have had at least four episodes of homelessness totaling at least a year in length.

Berkeley / Alameda and San Jose / Santa Clara, the two CoCs defining the Bay Area's unsheltered growth, have both seen the percent of their unhoused population experiencing unsheltered homelessness rise to 73.11% and 74.73% respectively. Again this indicates shelter infrastructure and services are not able to keep up with rising homelessness. While San Jose has halved the percentage of unsheltered unaccompanied youth to 8.89%, Berkeley has seen this percentage triple to 9.28%

CA CoC	Homeless Δ in % unsheltered	Unsheltered Δ in % unaccompanied under 25	Unsheltered Δ in % in families	Unsheltered Δ in % chronic	Unsheltered chronic Δ in % in families	Unsheltered Δ in % veterans
South Shore / Greater LA	0.30pp	-3.34pp	-0.26pp	12.51pp	-0.23pp	0.10pp
Bay Area	4.51pp	-8.15pp	-0.39pp	1.51pp	0.10pp	-3.03pp
North Central	23.71pp	-4.95pp	-9.95pp	12.68pp	-4.54pp	-4.06pp
Central	-5.26pp	-7.43pp	1.46pp	-1.23pp	-1.22pp	-2.25pp
Greater San Diego	-1.07pp	-5.05pp	-3.31pp	20.16pp	0.29pp	-1.17pp
Northern	-13.43pp	-9.61pp	-4.46pp	6.62pp	-0.75pp	1.25pp

Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)

Figure 24: The above table summarizes the distributional change, between 2016 and 2023, in different demographics of the Californian unsheltered population broken out by region. Of note is the dramatic increase in chronic homelessness in South Shore / LA, North Central, and Greater San Diego. This indicates growing long-term homelessness and an aging homeless population.

CA CoC	Homeless Δ in % unsheltered	Unsheltered Δ in % unaccompanied under 25	Unsheltered Δ in % in families	Unsheltered Δ in % chronic	Unsheltered chronic Δ in % in families	Unsheltered Δ in % veterans
Los Angeles	-1.41pp	-3.66pp	0.40pp	12.58pp	-0.11pp	0.83pp
Sacramento	33.88pp	-10.72pp	3.18pp	17.09pp	2.65pp	-8.75pp
Oakland, Berkeley / Alameda	15.28pp	6.32pp	-5.67pp	1.86pp	-1.14pp	-3.61pp
San Jose / Santa Clara	3.81pp	-7.97pp	1.79pp	-4.25pp	0.75pp	-4.90pp
San Bernardino	7.83pp	-4.92pp	-4.50pp	11.63pp	-1.80pp	-0.99pp
Fresno / Madera	-14.6pp	-0.87pp	0.31pp	4.55pp	-0.25pp	-3.90pp

Sousa et al. (Dec. 2023). *The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.* US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (OCPD)

Figure 25: Similar to Figure 24, the above table summarizes distributional shifts, between 2016 and 2023, in the demographics of the Californian unsheltered population but broken out by the CoCs with the largest unsheltered estimate increase. This allows us to see how dynamics are changing in the CoCs that define the regions in the prior Figure 24. Of note is the rise in the percent experiencing unsheltered homelessness across all CoCs except Los Angeles and Fresno, as well as the increases in chronic homelessness indicating an aging unhoused population

A third of the 2022-2023 increase is from the national increase in unsheltered homelessness. As shown above, this increase is actually concentrated in large West Coast urban centers, namely Los Angeles, Sacramento, and the Bay Area. All of them show signs of a shelter system unable to keep pace with the rise in unhoused populations, creating a spillover into chronic unsheltered homelessness. The harsh effects of unsheltered homelessness on health and stability will be discussed in section V, but put simply this growing chronic and unsheltered group is among the hardest to help recover and the most deprived in our nation.

2022 Unsheltered Survey Error

As briefly touched on before, the method for unsheltered estimates is much less precise than that of sheltered populations. In order to collect unsheltered estimates, large groups of volunteers must be recruited, trained, and organized to perform an on-the-ground sweep of

selected regions and tally the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness that they come across (Sousa et al., 2023). Volunteer recruitment and the selection of sweep zones are crucial for getting a representative sample from which to extrapolate. Large CoCs like Texas Balance of State face another issue, their territory is too large and, in places, sparsely populated to properly sweep for unsheltered estimates. If Texas were subject to methodological limitations in the small subsample of communities it surveys, it could significantly impact extrapolated estimates in the Balance of State CoC.

The majority of Texas BoS regional estimates are extrapolated via the following process (Texas Homeless Network, 2023, pg. 2):

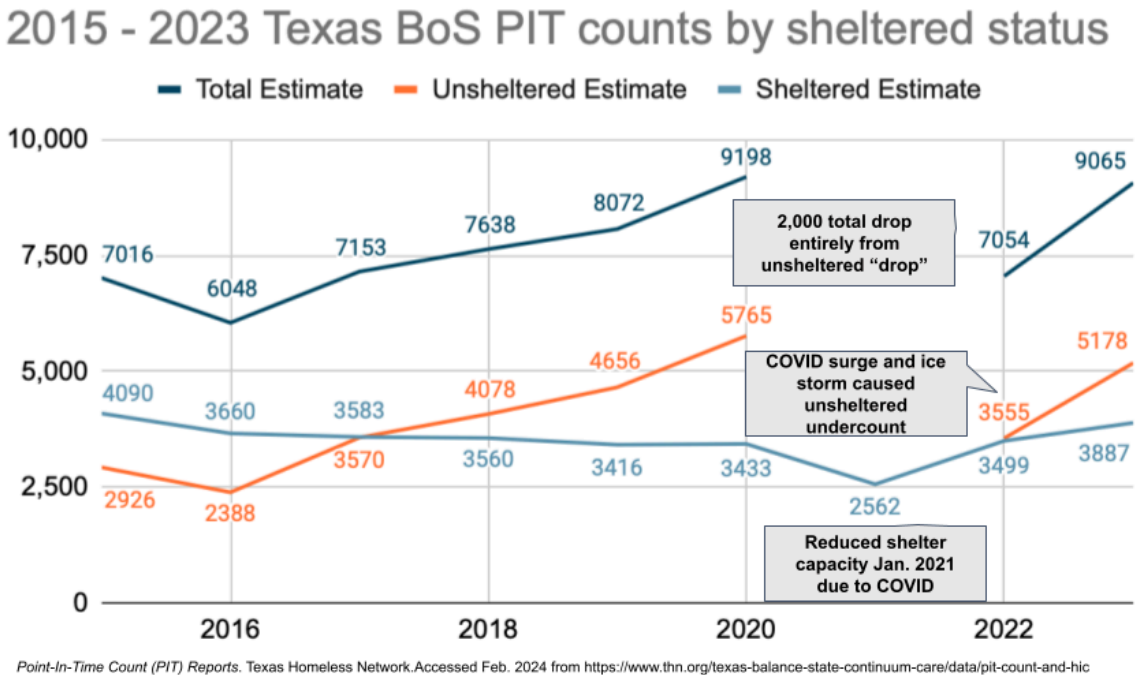
1) Match non-surveyed communities to surveyed communities based on population sizes.
2) Acquire a rough estimate of the total number of surveys for each non-surveyed community by applying the below formula on matched surveyed and non-surveyed community pairs.

$$\frac{Population\ of\ non{-}surveyed\ community}{Population\ of\ surveyed\ community} * \#\ surveys\ from\ in\ surveyed\ community$$

3) Use Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data to determine non-surveyed community household breakdown and calculate household multipliers based on household type ratios between matched non-surveyed and surveyed communities.
4) Use data gathered in steps 2 and 3 to extrapolate household demographic information by multiplying surveyed community results by household type multipliers (step 3) and adjusting for the expected number of surveys that would be collected (step 2).

Texas stands out among its large unsheltered increase peer CoCs both because it is not a West Coast CoC and because it has a very high, 45.7%, relative increase between 2022 and 2023

(Sousa et al. 2023). In reading their 2023 PIT report, Texas BoS raises concerns that the 2023 unsheltered population increase is dramatically inflated. These concerns stem from the fact that (1) there were serious survey limitations in the 2022 unsheltered count and (2) the 2023 unsheltered count, while significantly higher than the 2022 count, is slightly less than the 2020 count.



Point-In-Time Count (PIT) Reports. Texas Homeless Network.Accessed Feb. 2024 from https://www.thn.org/texas-balance-state-continuum-care/data/pit-count-and-hic

Figure 26: Above are the Texas BoS PIT counts since 2015 broken down by sheltered status. Sheltered estimates (light blue) have been steadily decreasing, with a sharper dip in 2021 when shelter capacity was reduced to try and stem the transmission of COVID-19. 2022 onward shows a slight climb in sheltered estimates. Total homelessness (dark blue) has been increasing with unsheltered estimates (orange) since 2016, with a sharp drop downward in 2022 followed by a spike of ~1,600 to return to 2020 levels.

Figure 26 highlights the concerns of a 2022 unsheltered undercount. There was no 2021 unsheltered count due to COVID lockdowns, but in 2022 Texas attempted to return to the normal PIT count. Texas experienced a major COVID surge in late January which caused them to add another survey date in early February. Unfortunately, the COVID surge was still active and both survey dates saw major ice storms across the state. This significantly hindered volunteer

recruitment, turnout, and ability to find people experiencing unsheltered homelessness (Texas Homeless Network, 2022, pg. 4). In the 2023 PIT report, the organizers report significantly improved turnout and confidence in their results. They warn that the observed 1,623 person increase in unsheltered homelessness is likely not a true jump, but rather one resulting from an improved survey that boosted the unsheltered count back to "normal" levels (Texas Homeless Network, 2023, pg. 4).

While this does not change Texas BoS's overall 2016-2023 unsheltered trend, it does highlight how survey limitations in 2022 due to COVID may have contributed to 2022 unsheltered underestimates. These undercounts were likely corrected in the 2023 surveys, inflating the 2022-2023 unsheltered increase. While we did not have time to estimate how much of the 2022-2023 increase is due to this 2022 unsheltered survey error it is likely minor compared to the asylum seeker or unsheltered growth trend effect. Future research could programmatically identify CoCs with a sharp drop in 2022 unsheltered estimates which rebounded in 2023 to be near or greater than 2020 estimates. One could then follow up with the 2022 and 2023 PIT reports of the CoCs identified by this naïve search method to find signs of undercounting.

V. Literature Review

The academic literature on US homelessness can be broadly grouped into 3 categories. (1) Program evaluations that look at local-level program implementations and evaluate their effectiveness against program goals, (2) overviews of local or state-level trends to link potential macro-causes to shifts in homelessness, and (3) analyses of survey data to quantify measurement error and link sources to produce more granular data for study.

The majority of pre-2020 literature from category (1) is concentrated on evaluating the Obama administration's RRH demonstrations, and other RRH programs inspired by them, from a decade ago (Burt et al., 2016; Byrne et al., 2015; García & Kim, 2020; Piña & Pirog, 2018; Rodriguez & Eidelman, 2016). There is a burgeoning literature examining post-2020 trends and programming effects primarily in New York City and Los Angeles which shows promise in exposing new modern dynamics and creative programs born from COVID-era constraints (Horton et al., 2020; Baggett et al., 2020; Doran & Tinson, 2021; Huggett et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Most of the new literature from category (2) is similarly focused on examining dynamics and experiences of homelessness in California and New York (Nisar et al, 2019; Henry et al., 2014; Kuhn et al., 2020; Glynn & Fox, 2017; Nisar et al., 2020; Streeter, 2022).

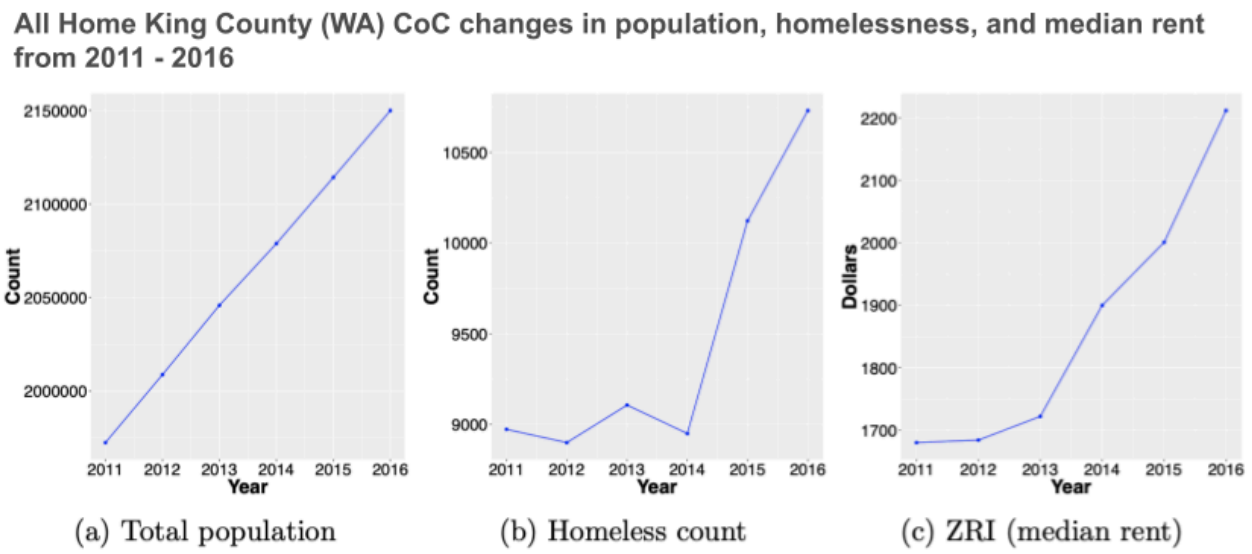
Measurement literature from category (3) is relatively new and is making interesting strides to better utilize census, CoC services, and PIT data from an evermore mature national homelessness data ecosystem (Meyer et al., 2023; Richard et al., 2020). These new efforts to improve estimates and link individuals across datasets are enabling the study of a new set of questions at much higher precision (Evans et al., 2021).

As mentioned in section II, our investigation focuses on 3 main areas: (a) The effect of asylum seekers on sheltered homelessness, (b) localizing the post-2016 growth trend in unsheltered homelessness, and (c) error in 2022 unsheltered survey counts due to COVID. Due to the recency of (a) and (c) there is not a wealth of relevant literature to pull from. Area (b), on the other hand, is in direct conversation with parts of category (2) of the literature which focus on characterizing modern homelessness in California. With that in mind, we take some time below to overview different hypotheses on what may be driving unsheltered homelessness on the West Coast.

Nisar et al. and Glynn & Fox presented correlative evidence that high rents and low housing availability are associated with higher rates of unsheltered homelessness while Kuhn et al. perform a comparative study between Los Angeles and New York City which indicates restrictive zoning and a PSH focused shelter strategy in Los Angeles are hindering the counties' ability to scale services to match their growing unhoused population.

An unsheltered increase of 20,000 people on the West Coast in California, Washington, and Oregon between 2015-2017 prompted an academic review of covariates and potential explanatory variables for number increases across CoCs (Henry et al., 2014; Kuhn et al., 2020). Nisar et al. constructed a dataset of 2017 unhoused estimates for 376 CoCs and estimated regression coefficients against rates of homelessness for over 60 independent variables relating to housing, economic, safety net, demographic, and climate conditions (2019). Their analysis includes a model dedicated to unsheltered estimates of West Coast CoCs in California, Washington, and Oregon which produced more significant factors compared to a model fit on national CoC data.

The authors found an intuitive and marginally significant negative relationship between median rent and unsheltered homelessness, although the authors note that many other significant housing-related factors may be picking up the effect rather than median rents. Furthermore, the authors use nominal median rents rather than change in median rent, so it may be capturing differences in unsheltered homelessness rates across high and low-income CoCs. While results are far from conclusive, they do find high housing density, an indication of the availability of housing, and occupancy rates of HUD-assisted units are associated with lower rates of unsheltered homelessness.



Glynn, Chris & Fox, Emily (2017). *Dynamics of homelessness in urban America.* The Annals of Applied Statistics. Accessed from https://arxiv.org/pdf/1707.09380.pdf

Figure 27: Pulled from Glynn & Fox, 2017, these plots display data for All home King County CoC in Washington state from 2011-2016. While limited in scope, it shows the motivating trend for the authors, which is that homelessness and median rent move with similar trends. The authors go on to show the robustness of this relationship across different CoCs.

Glynn & Fox leverage dynamic Bayesian hierarchical models for inferred homeless counts over time between 2011-2016 to estimate the relationship between community-level median rents and homeless counts in the largest 25 US metropolitan areas (2017). They observe the rates of homelessness in New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Washington D.C. are most strongly tied to rents. While this study does not posit any causal claims, it shows the remarkable robustness of linked cost and homelessness trends.

Nisar et al. do a further investigation of unsheltered homelessness using newer housing market data from 2014-2018 matched with CoC level PIT counts (2020). They also separate CoCs into the following 4 groups:

1. "**Steady increasing**" CoCs with two increasing unsheltered homeless counts.
2. "**Fluctuating increasing**" CoCs with a larger 2019 count of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness than in 2015 but varying intermediate trends.

3. "**Fluctuating decreasing**" CoCs that had a smaller 2019 count of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness than in 2015 and varying intermediate trends.

4. "**Steady decreasing**" CoCs that had decreasing intermediate trends.

They find that CoCs with increasing unsheltered homelessness rates tend to have tighter housing markets, more expensive new construction, low supportive housing, and stagnant emergency shelter beds per capita. Meanwhile CoCs with decreasing unsheltered rates had higher rental vacancy rates and low incidences of housing overcrowding, both potentially indicating that higher housing supply may be linked to lower rates of homelessness. Combined, these paint a picture that tight housing markets coupled with low shelter infrastructure are associated with higher homelessness that spills over into unsheltered counts.

The authors also find that CoCs with increasing unsheltered homelessness have poor conversion rates when doing outreach for homelessness services and, interestingly, the CoCs with steadily decreasing unsheltered homelessness had significant RRH bed count growth between 2015 and 2019. The paper again reinforces the impact of housing market forces on unsheltered homelessness but also introduces interactions between emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, and RRH bed inventories as potential factors.

Kuhn et al. do a deep dive on increases in the Los Angeles CoC's homelessness increase, which is nearly entirely from unsheltered counts, and critiques outcomes from Los Angeles Measures H and HHH which approved significant funding for homeless services and outreach (2020). The authors open with a critical comparison between New York City and Los Angeles because — despite sharing similar rates of poverty, homelessness, and housing cost burden — NYC's unhoused population is almost entirely sheltered while the inverse is true in Los Angeles.

Measure	Los Angeles	New York
Housing cost-burdened	**46%**	**42%**
Severely cost-burdened	**24%**	**22%**
Poverty rate	**18%**	**20%**
% Homeless	**0.6%**	**0.7%**
% of homeless unsheltered	**75%**	**6%**

Figure 28: This replication of Table 1 in Kuhn et al. (2020) displays a surface-level quantitative comparison of homelessness and housing costs in Los Angeles and New York in 2019. While the two cities have the largest homeless populations and similar rates of poverty, homelessness, and housing cost burdens, they differ dramatically in the sheltered distribution of their unhoused populations.

This comparison motivates their analysis of Los Angeles's implementation of shelter programs compared to NYC. They begin by characterizing the Los Angeles approach to shelter construction, which is a significant investment in specifically PSH units. While the authors acknowledge the successful construction and utilization of thousands of PSH beds, they take a critical eye to the one-size-fits-all approach of PSH case-manager services and the lack of investment in emergency shelters. This is contrasted with NYC, which has a significant emergency shelter system to act as triage before diverting people to PSH or RRH units based on needs. PSH units are typically reserved for chronically homeless New Yorkers with more dramatic needs while RRH units are assigned to lower-need clients.

Kuhn et al. ultimately recommend that Los Angeles take a more adaptive approach to homelessness which involves emergency shelters as triage and adding adaptability to PSH services to better meet the unique needs of clients. The authors also urge for the reduction of zoning limitations to speed up shelter construction.

VI. Policy Implications

The main two trends we identify as contributing to the significant increase in estimated homeless populations between January 2022 and January 2022 are (1) the influx of South and Central American asylum seekers in New York City, Chicago, and Denver and (2) the steady increase in unsheltered homelessness along the West Coast. Both of these major trends present different stressors and as such will be discussed separately.

Continued Rise of Asylum Seekers

Since January 2023, the observed asylum seeker populations in emergency shelters have grown across all three major cities identified. In New York City, the number of asylum seekers staying in city-funded shelters rose from 28,370 on January 30, 2023, to 64,800 as of March 3, 2024 (Office of the NYC Comptroller, 2024). The Associated Press reported in January of 2024 that Chicago had approximately 14,000 asylum seekers staying in the city's growing network of then 28 shelters, a significant increase compared to the 2,176 reported in the PIT count from almost exactly a year prior (Tareen, 2024). Denver hit a peak on January 11, 2024, of 5,210 asylum seekers, more than 4 times our estimated late January 2023 count (Denver Office of the Mayor, 2024).

These 3 are not the only cities struggling to keep up. San Diego has since emerged as a Border Patrol drop-off location and are having their systems overwhelmed. By August of 2023, San Diego had encountered more than 4,000 Venezuelans at the border, which is greater than the prior 3 fiscal years combined (Mejías-Pascoe & Meyers, 2023). In interviews with service providers, they admitted to being overwhelmed and sending the new arrivals to homeless shelters. Over the end of September and the first half of October, 14,000 additional asylum

seekers were dropped off by federal border authorities (Velasco, 2023). The majority of asylum seekers will not end up homeless, but there is a substantial lag between arrival, processing, and redirection to their intended US destination. Velasco reported local respite and emergency non-profit shelters being overwhelmed in October as the county approved $3 million in leftover American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to provide services to the growing population.

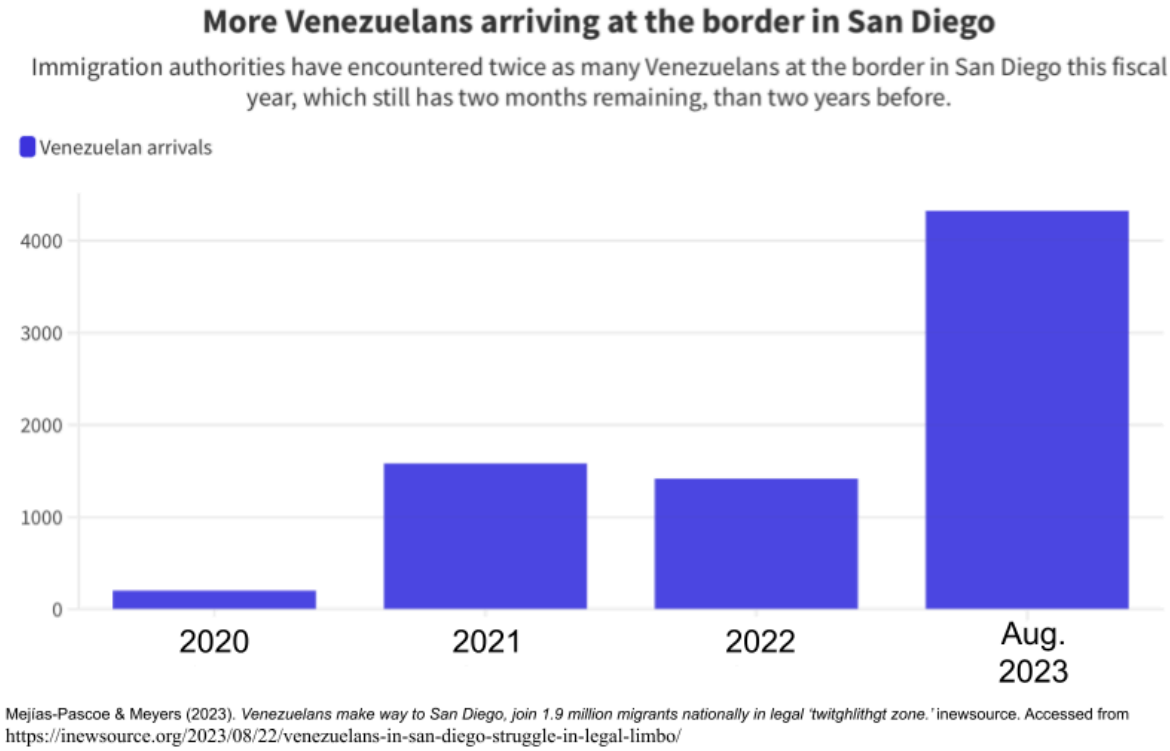


Figure 29: The above is pulled from Mejías-Pascoe & Meyers to illustrate the increase in Venezuelans arriving as of August 2022. The article chooses to focus on primarily Venezuelans as the most prevalent demographic among those arriving in San Diego County.

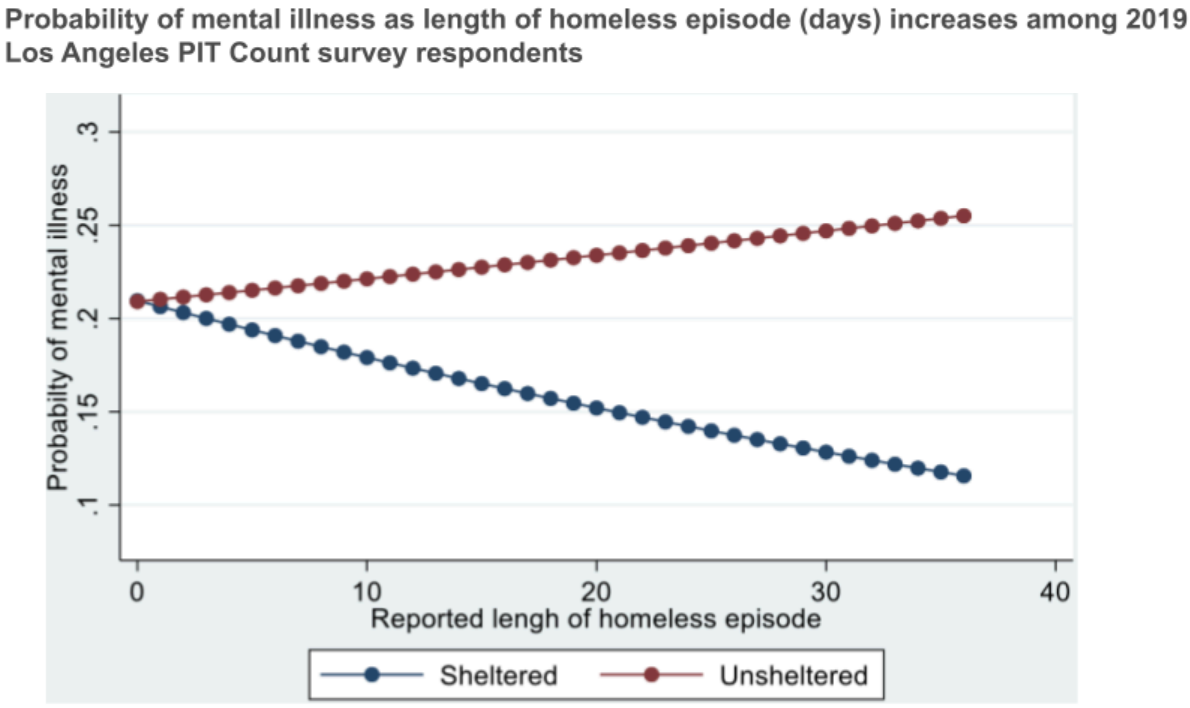
Over 42,000 asylum seekers had been dropped in San Diego by December 2022, more than 10 times what had been seen in the prior three years combined (Robles et al., 2023). The $3 million in ARPA funding from November had run out and the city was working on a proposal for another $3 million. There has been sparse journalistic reporting since but there is real concern that what happened in New York City, Chicago, and Denver is happening in San Diego now too. Asylum seekers arriving in massive numbers overwhelming local legal aid and temporary

immigration services. The result is a slowed local immigration process and shelter spillover into the homeless system. We look now to Kuhn et al. and recent reporting from the big 3 asylum effect cities to see what the effects of overwhelmed shelter services are.

Impact of Overwhelmed Shelters

New York City, Chicago, and Denver have all put in place emergency stay limits, which require shelter inhabitants to vacate and reapply for shelter every 30-60 days depending on the city. While a practically motivated decision based on limited shelter beds, there are major concerns moving forward about unsheltered populations. In its comparison of New York City and Los Angeles, Kuhn et al. discuss what they propose as the best roles for emergency versus supportive housing services (Kuhn et al, 2020).

The authors posit that emergency shelters, although temporary and low-touch, provide an excellent triage stop for many going through recent or particularly challenging episodes of homelessness. From ES locations, clients can be diverted to more resource-intensive supportive programs like RRH and PSH based on their needs. When done properly, this adaptive approach allows clients to be served by the services that are empirically shown to best improve outcomes.



Kuhn et al. (2020). *Homelessness and Public Health in Los Angeles*. UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. Accessed from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2gn3x56s

Figure 30: The above is pulled from Kuhn et al. (2020) to show how mental health outcomes vary by shelter status as the length of time spent homeless increases. The lack of basic resources and harsher living conditions during extended periods of unsheltered homelessness is linked to the rapid deterioration of mental and physical health.

As illustrated in Figure 30 above, the harsher living conditions of unsheltered homelessness are linked to quicker harm to physical and mental health when compared to sheltered homelessness. Instability and health problems are frequently cited as barriers to recovery from episodes of homelessness (Sousa, 2023). This is why emergency shelters are so important as triage locations, being able to quickly identify those with higher service needs and getting them the necessary support can reduce the number of people who are at critical risk and improve aggregate outcomes. Beyond idealistic conceptions of the role of emergency shelters, they keep people off the streets and reduce the health degradation and recovery barriers associated with extended episodes of unsheltered homelessness.

As it stands, shelter and supportive housing services are overwhelmed with thousands of new arrivals, particularly in New York City. As such, many people are being churned through the

shelter system by the new stay limitations and those who may require RRH or PSH services for recovery are less likely to gain access. Looking ahead to the 2024 and 2025 PIT counts, there may be an increase in both chronic and unsheltered homelessness in these key sheltered increase cities as recovery systems are unable to keep up with demand. Troublingly, those struggling with chronic homelessness, unsheltered status, and health issues are the most expensive to support and least likely to recover.

VII. Policy Recommendations

The primary short-term concerns are the downstream effects of an overwhelmed shelter system in New York City, Chicago, Denver, and potentially San Diego. If left unchecked we are likely to see a rise in unsheltered homelessness as shelter services are unable to keep up with the skyrocketing demand. As discussed in Kuhn et al., the effects of unsheltered homelessness on personal health and chances of recovery are abysmal, so a speedy deconcentration of people in the shelter system is of the utmost importance. Looking ahead there are 3 routes to reducing shelter system strain while helping asylum seekers find stability: (1) legal clinics apply for work permits and submit fee waivers, (2) landlord outreach to increase shelter capacity, and (3) geographic redistribution of asylum seekers to other CoCs with shelter capacity.

To begin, many asylum seekers do not have work permits upon relocation and as such cannot support themselves or their families. Regardless of where they are in asylum proceedings, US employers are not allowed to hire them if they do not have an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) (Petts, 2020). To acquire an EAD requires the filing of form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, and the payment of a $520 application fee for paper filing or $470 for online filing (University of Washington, 2024). For people living in homeless shelters, this is a prohibitive expense. Asylum seekers who are experiencing financial hardship

and cannot pay this application fee can file form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver, which cannot be submitted online (USCIS, 2024).

As becomes quickly clear when looking into the work authorization process, it is a complex and expensive legal process. To try and address this, Chicago and the White House launched a series of work authorization clinics that provide a one-stop-shop for applying for both EADs and fee waivers (Loria & Sweet, 2023). These workshops were coordinated by the non-profit Resurrection Project and had the participation of other legal service providers. These sorts of clinics make it easier for people to navigate the paperwork and get authorized to work and start supporting themselves as fast as possible. The city emergency budgets being directed at the "migrant crisis" in NYC, Chicago, Denver, and San Diego need to adopt similar clinic programming. Given the relevance to homelessness, there is an argument that the Biden Administration's All-In initiative should incorporate guidance on implementing such clinics as well.

Second, the lack of stable income combined with language barriers and unstable internet access makes it difficult to lease from landlords (Lee, 2023). The work permit issue is addressed by the prior recommendation, but even if applications are submitted landlords are likely to be hesitant about financially unstable asylum seekers and the apartment search process is difficult for asylum seekers staying in homeless shelters with limited English. This is where a COVID-era program out of Chicago can be repurposed to build landlord trust and assist in apartment matching.

During the height of the pandemic, Chicago created the Expedited Housing Initiative to move people from shelters to hotels and subsidized RRH units as quickly as possible to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk (All Chicago, 2024). To keep up a stock of available units and

speed up the matching process, the city created the Chicago Rents program. Chicago coordinated landlord outreach and program promotion to assure landlords of the legitimacy of homeless referrals and create an online database of units leased by landlords open to taking on recently homeless renters. To help ease the moving process, the city partnered with homeless shelters and the Chicago Furniture Bank to host Accelerated Moving Events (AMEs). Referred clients could go to these events to get matched to units from the Chicago Rents database, pick up furniture, and work out any logistical issues for moving. This combination of landlord outreach and AMEs could be targeted at sheltered asylum seekers and even be connected to the work permit application workshops to help expedite the process of finding stability.

Our third recommendation looks to make use of underutilized shelter infrastructure in the rest of the country. As discussed in section IV, part of the reason shelter systems are overwhelmed is because the geographic distribution of asylum seekers is extremely concentrated. It is important to recognize that the, often non-consensual, bussing of asylum seekers from Texas to “sanctuary cities” is a part of what spurred this crisis in the first place. That said, there is underutilized emergency shelter infrastructure in neighboring and in-state CoCs that can at least provide some more stability and regular services.

While certainly the Occam’s razor stopgap, this option is extremely politically unpopular. Counties from the Massachusetts BoS CoC attempted to do just this by transferring asylum seekers to adjacent wealthy suburbs with capacity. They were met with organized backlash from suburban families who raised concerns about neighborhood safety (Mutasa, 2024). New York City sued 17 bus companies that helped transport asylum seekers from Texas to NYC as a part of Operation Lone Star (Zanger & Brennan, 2024).

In spite of the political retaliation, New York, like parts of Massachusetts, has started sending asylum seekers to suburbs with capacity (Anuta & Spector, 2023). The option is also popular among many asylum seekers who were dropped off far from their destination in overwhelmed cities. Of the 27,000 asylum seekers who arrived in Denver between November 2022-2023, half chose to take offered bus, train, or plane tickets to other cities (Bedayn, 2023). The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago have used state funds to buy tickets for over 2,500 asylum seekers with connections elsewhere in the country. Biden's All In initiative and state governments can help put political weight behind the decision to redistribute asylum seekers in-state to better match shelter capacity to clients.

VIII. Conclusion

We have disaggregated the unprecedented 2023-2024 jump in homelessness into its sheltered asylum seeker, 7 year unsheltered growth, and 2022 unsheltered undercount components. Asylum seekers from South and Central America began arriving in large numbers starting the summer of 2022 and overwhelmed the shelter capacity of New York City, Chicago, and Denver contributing at minimum 42.46% of the 2022-2023 increase. Approximately a third of the increase was due to the continued rise of the unsheltered population on the West Coast and Texas. That said, the 2022-2023 unsheltered increase was minorly inflated by unsheltered undercounts in the 2022 PIT survey due to COVID and weather as seen in the Texas BoS CoC.

Given the overwhelmed state of the shelter system in New York, Chicago, Denver, and likely San Diego, quick action is necessary to reduce unsheltered exposure and the associated health and stability harms. To this end, we recommend the following 3 actions in the previously listed cities experiencing the greatest asylum seeker effect: (1) legal clinics to streamline applications for work permits and associated fee waivers, (2) landlord outreach and moving

events targeted at sheltered asylum seekers with work permits to stabilize them and free up shelter capacity, and (3) the redistribution of asylum seekers to neighboring CoCs with open shelter capacity.

Through these actions, we aim to free up shelter services in the hardest-hit cities and assist in the integration of asylum seekers. If left undone, the repeated cycling of sheltered populations and unaddressed legal needs of asylum seekers will run local resources dry and increase unsheltered populations. Regardless of people's opinions on asylum seekers or people experiencing homelessness, there is a pressing need for fast action. The extreme effects unsheltered homelessness has on health and the odds of recovery must not be put off or further politicized. Lest we fail the already vulnerable, our new community members, and our values as a nation.

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