

HOMELESS SNAPSHOT

While more people were sleeping in shelters, Multnomah County's overall homeless population spiked, according to the county's latest Point-In-Time count

It's not surprising Portland saw a 10 percent increase in homelessness between 2016 and 2017. The average one-bedroom apartment now rents for more than \$1,100 a month, according to data from Multifamily NW.

That number has grown 20 times faster than the median income since 2015.

More than 18,000 people in Multnomah County rely on federal disability checks that top out at \$735 a month, according to the 2017 Homeless Point In Time report. For minimum wage workers, rent increases since 2005 have cost thousands of dollars in real income and made it more difficult to tend to other basic needs.

In 2016, there were 185,000 households in the Portland-metro region eligible for affordable housing, according to the Metro Equitable Housing Study.

But there are only about 30,000 affordable units in the same area.

The State of Oregon has proposed cutting millions

of dollars in rent assistance. Additional federal housing cuts proposed under the Trump administration would result in the loss of tens of millions of dollars locally for both affordable housing and rent assistance.

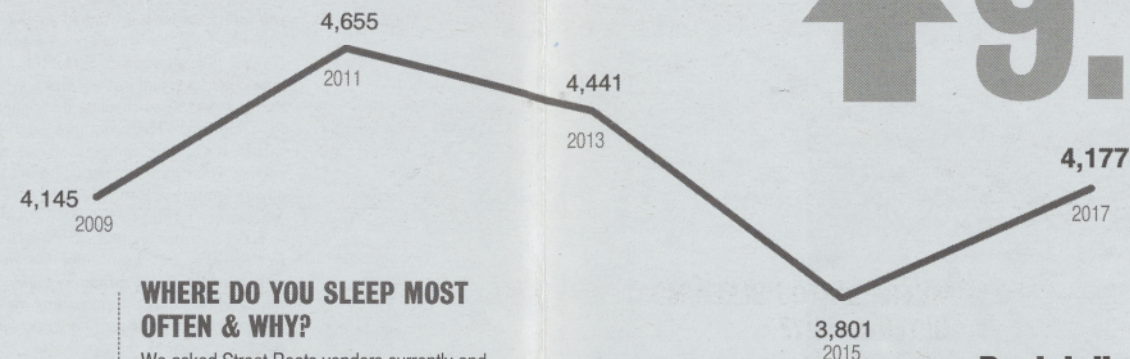
Locally, however, investments are being made. Portland voters passed an affordable housing bond this past November, which will fund the construction of more than a 1,000 units to support 3,000 individuals and families. Together, Portland and Multnomah County governments are investing nearly \$50 million dollars annually to support giving people access to housing in the region.

But proposed cuts mean these investments will go toward filling a deepening hole.

Street Roots continues to pressure local government to provide a more sustainable ongoing revenue tool to support giving people access to more housing, including rent assistance, mental health facilities and more.

HOMELESS COUNT IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

From the Point-In-Time survey, conducted every two years



WHERE DO YOU SLEEP MOST OFTEN & WHY?

We asked Street Roots vendors currently and formerly experiencing homelessness where they preferred to sleep.

"Under the Morrison Bridge on the East end. ... Shelters are dirty, and there are bed bugs. It's not a safe place to go. ... Last time I was in a shelter, I witnessed a stabbing over a light socket because they wanted to plug in their phone. When the weather is bad, I will go to Imago Dei."



"For the first three months, I slept outside in the woods, and I had one campmate. It just felt like of places to sleep outside, it was the safest. ... We tried to stay hidden by using camouflage sheets. After I got to the front of the wait list for a woman's shelter that's nicer than most of the shelters. I stayed there for 6 1/2 months. When I first became homeless, almost all the shelters were booked full or had wait lists, until I got to the front of the wait list, which took about 2 1/2 months."



"We're in shelter, the Hansen Shelter. Because my girlfriend, fiancé, is disabled, and I don't want to see her on the street. Been there since it opened, almost a year. (Before that?) Mostly in shelter."

BILL W., 50

"We have an RV. We spent \$300 on her; she has a 344 magnum engine though, so she was worth it. She's practically falling apart though. She's got wood rot, damage mold. But it's home. ... It's the safest place I can be. We have camped. With the PTSD we both have, it does not work, and we were staying in a village, but the PTSD that caused, didn't work."



AILEEN MCPHERSON, 42

"On the streets. ... I didn't know much, really, about the shelters - I buried my only child and had a slight nervous breakdown, and I ended up on the streets. ... I slept in front of TPI, under the bridge, until I got raped. ... I went and found out they opened up the winter shelter, so I made it in there."



FRANCINE RANA PARKS, 57

Racial disparities

People of color made up 40.5 percent of this year's homeless count, up from 38.8 percent in 2015. By contrast, people of color make up 29 percent of Multnomah County's population.

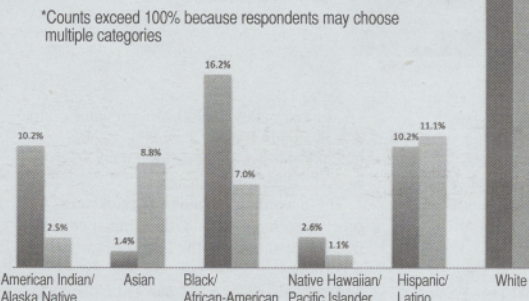
These data use HUD's definition of homelessness, which doesn't include people who are involuntarily doubled up or sleeping on couches, in garages or in overcrowded situations. This definition reduces the visibility of communities of color overall.

NATIVE AMERICANS

Native Americans represented a substantial increase within the overall homeless population. The count rose from 82 in 2015 to 424 in 2017.

The 2015 count reported a low tally of Native Americans. This year's surge is likely a correction of an unexplained issue with the 2015 count, rather than an actual four-fold increase in the number of Native American people experiencing homelessness, according to the Point-In-Time report.

Percentage of 2017 Point-In-Time results*
Percent of Multnomah County population* (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-15 American Community Survey five-year estimates)



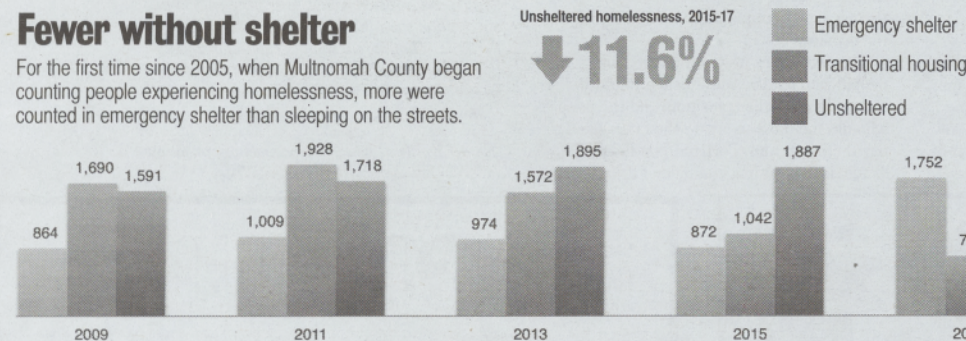
About the count

The Point-In-Time count is a census of people sleeping in shelters, transitional housing or places not fit for habitation, conducted on a given night every two years. Starting next year, the local count will occur once a year. This year's local count occurred Feb. 22, with volunteers and workers asking people where they slept that night. Communities must conduct the count to remain eligible for federal housing grants.

SOURCE: 2017 MULTNOMAH COUNTY POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

Fewer without shelter

For the first time since 2005, when Multnomah County began counting people experiencing homelessness, more were counted in emergency shelter than sleeping on the streets.

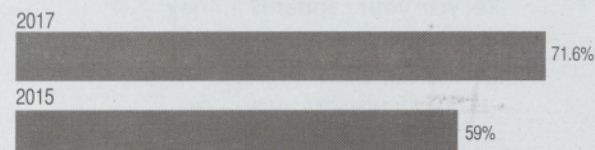


Unsheltered with disabilities or chronic homelessness

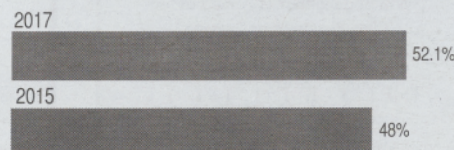
People who report disabilities make up a larger share of this year's unsheltered count in Multnomah County, and the number of people considered chronically homeless in this year's count also increased. People in these categories often struggle with health issues that complicate efforts to bring them into housing.

Percentage of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness, Multnomah County Point-In-Time count:

PEOPLE WITH DISABLING CONDITIONS



CHRONICALLY HOMELESS ADULTS



Beyond Multnomah County

KING COUNTY

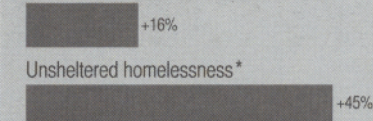
(Seattle)

Unsheltered: 3,772

Sheltered/transitional housing: 10,047

Overall: 13,819

Overall homelessness, 2015-17*



What they are doing about it

Like Portland, Seattle has declared a state of housing emergency and is struggling with providing adequate housing.

In 2016, Seattle passed a housing levy for \$290 million. The levy has been passed on five occasions since 1981 and has helped build 12,500 units of affordable housing and has helped 900 households purchase their first home. It has also helped prevent 6,500 individuals and families from being evicted.

King County is currently exploring a sales tax to take to voters in 2018 for \$469 million for homeless services.

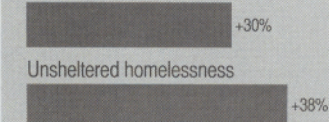
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Unsheltered: 14,966

Sheltered/transitional housing: 42,828

Overall: 57,794

Overall homelessness, 2015-17



What they are doing about it

The numbers in Los Angeles are staggering. The county has responded by passing a \$1 billion affordable housing bond in November, followed by a \$3.5 billion voter-approved sales tax for homeless services just months later. The sales tax will create \$355 million annually for the next 10 years.

* King County changed its street count methodology in 2017

Read more

DIRECTOR'S DESK

As Multnomah County reports an increase in people experiencing homelessness, the state announces a huge drop in funding for its most vulnerable residents. [Page 3](#)

ONLINE

Read Street Roots' continuing coverage of the homeless crisis and local housing issues: news.streetroots.org/housing