Demographic Brief

Experiences of Human Trafficking and Sexual Abuse Among Persons Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care from the 2023 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count

Requested by: Anabel Martinez

Request Date: April 22, 2024

Data Source (if applicable): 2023 Unsheltered Demographic Survey and PIT Count (*HC2023_DemogTables_20230519.xlsx*, *HC2023_hhold_elig.dta*, and *YC2023_hhold_elig.dta*)
Date completed: June 12, 2024
**If you have any questions or concerns please contact datasupport@lahsa.org*

Results

Table 1a. Experiences of Human Trafficking Among Adults Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care,[a] 2023

Estimated Total Population				
Category of PEH [b]	Number	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Uncertainty[c]	Percent
All Unsheltered Adults, 18+ years of age	50,477	48,917 – 52,037	6.2%	100.0
Estimated Category Subpopulation of Adults, 18+ years of age				
Whether Reported Human Trafficking Experiences [b]	Number	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Uncertainty[c]	Percent
No	43,750	39,972 – 47,528	17.3%	86.7
Yes	6,727	3,467 – 9,988	96.9%	13.3

Table 1b. Experiences of Human Trafficking Among Adults Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness in the City of Los Angeles, 2023

Estimated Total Population				
Category of PEH [b]	Number	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Uncertainty[c]	Percent
All Unsheltered Adults, 18+ years of age	31,623	30,940 – 32,306	4.3%	100.0
Estimated Category Subpopulation of Adults, 18+ years of age				
Whether Reported Human Trafficking Experiences [b]	Number	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Uncertainty[c]	Percent
No	27,236	24,770 – 29,702	18.1%	86.1
Yes	4,387	1,921 – 6,853	112.4%	13.9

Table 2a. Experiences of Sexual Abuse Among Adults Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care,[a] 2023

Estimated Total Population				
Category of PEH [b]	Number	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Uncertainty[c]	Percent
All Unsheltered Adults, 18+ years of age	50,477	48,917 – 52,037	6.2%	100.0
Estimated Category Subpopulation of Adults, 18+ years of age				
Whether Reported Sexual Abuse [b]	Number	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Uncertainty[c]	Percent
No	45,074	40,539 – 49,610	20.1%	89.3
Yes	[c]	[c]	167.9%	10.7

Table 2b. Experiences of Sexual Abuse Among Adults Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness in the City of Los Angeles, 2023

Estimated Total Population				
Category of PEH [b]	Number	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Uncertainty[c]	Percent
All Unsheltered Adults, 18+ years of age	31,623	30,940 – 32,306	4.3%	100.0
Estimated Category Subpopulation of Adults, 18+ years of age				
Whether Reported Sexual Abuse [b]	Number	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Uncertainty[c]	Percent
No	27,782	24,406 – 31,159	24.3%	87.9
Yes	[c]	[c]	175.8%	12.1

Source. Demographic Survey and PIT Count facets of the 2023 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count.
Notes. [a] The LA CoC does not include the Pasadena, Glendale, and Long Beach CoCs.
[b] See Methodology for details.
[c] Generally, estimates with Relative Uncertainty < 65% can be interpreted confidently; estimates where 65% ≤ Relative Uncertainty < 130% may need to be interpreted cautiously; and estimates with Relative Uncertainty ≥ 130% are not reported because their uncertainty is too great for reliable interpretation.

LOS ANGELES HOMELESS SERVICES AUTHORITY

LAHSA

Data Details

Base Population

The Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count (GLAHC) is for the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC), not the entire County of Los Angeles. Pasadena, Glendale, and Long Beach CoCs are not included. Persons 18 years of age and older (*transition age youth* [TAY] ages 18–24 years and *adults* ages 25 years and older) experiencing unsheltered homelessness (unsheltered PEH), responding for themselves as heads of households (i.e., no other household members responded to relevant items) or individuals with no other family/household members, are the population from which survey responses were selected for analysis.

Definitions

The tabulations for experiences of *sexual abuse* and *human trafficking* include only non-missing responses to the birthdate (used to calculate age) and Item Numbers 39 and 53 ("Have you experienced any of the following forms of violence of abuse?"—focusing on the three relevant response choices: "Sexual abuse by intimate partner or spouse," "… by parent, guardian, other relative", "… by someone else while unsheltered"—and "Have you been forced to work, where you didn't get paid or got paid less than expected?", respectively).

Additional Considerations

The relative uncertainty of both the CoC's and the City's estimated numbers of persons with human trafficking experiences (the span of the confidence interval divided by the size of the point estimate) is large (96.9% and 112.4%, respectively). Using the standards developed by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS; see Parker et al., 2017), these estimates provide worthwhile, rough numbers for getting a sense of the subgroup size (see Tables 1a and 1b, Note c). Nonetheless, because there was some response bias, as well as uncertainty, these can neither be considered precise nor highly accurate estimates.

Unfortunately, unlike for human trafficking, the percentages of adult and TAY unsheltered PEH having experienced sexual abuse are not reported here because the uncertainty in their estimates is so high as to make them potentially misleading (their relative uncertainties are 167.9% for the CoC and 175.8% for the City; see Tables 2a and 2b). The magnitude of the uncertainties for those reporting sexual abuse experiences are much greater than the sizes of the estimates themselves, so the estimates provide little to no reliable information for most purposes. It would be imprudent to draw attention to their point values.

In sum, precisely estimating how many adult and TAY unsheltered PEH experienced human trafficking or sexual abuse was not possible. Rough, reportable estimates for those experiencing human trafficking were obtained for both the LA CoC and the City of LA (both within 13%–14%; see Tables 1a and 1b), but the estimation uncertainties for those reporting sexual abuse experiences were so great as to make reporting them imprudent and inadvisable (see Tables 2a and 2b)..

Methodology

A detailed report of the methods employed for population estimates from the 2023 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count was published by Henwood et al. (2023).

Specific to this report, in 2023, a total of 3,473 eligible surveys were obtained from the sample of unsheltered adult PEH from which 3,747 individual unsheltered PEH of all ages were identified, and 178 eligible surveys were obtained from the sample of unsheltered youth (TAY and minor) PEH from which 189 individual unsheltered youth PEH were identified (see Henwood et al., 2023, pp. 19–20). Responses from a total of 3,685 individuals 18 years of age and older with non-missing data for human trafficking and sexual abuse were included in the final analysis.

The numbers reported are survey-based estimates, not true counts, so this report includes the 95% confidence intervals for the estimates, their relative uncertainties, and percents of respondents identifying whether they experienced human trafficking or sexual abuse. Standards developed by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS; see Parker et al., 2017) are used to evaluate whether the estimates are sufficiently precise to report and, if so, whether they should be flagged for their (im)precision (i.e., whether to be interpreted with or without caution).

The analyses assumed that survey non-response is unbiased, and that missing data are missing at random, so what appears here are the proportions estimated for item respondents only applied to the estimated total number for All Unsheltered Adults, 18+ years of age. The calculation of the estimated total assumes that respondents identifying as improvised dwelling occupants, particularly those experiencing vehicular homelessness, are an unbiased sample from those subgroups.

References

Henwood, B., Hickey, S., Kwack, S., Landrian-Gonzalez, A., St. Clair, P., Stein, A., Kuhn, R., & Petering, R. (2023, July). *2023 Los Angeles Continuum of Care Homeless Count methodology report*. Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, University of Southern California. https://dworakpeck.usc.edu/sites/default/files/2023-11/2023%20USC%20Homeless%20Count%20Methodology%20Report_20230710.pdf

Parker, J. D., Talih, M., Malec, D. J., Beresovsky, V., Carroll, M., Gonzalez, J. F., Jr., Hamilton, B. E., Ingram, D. D., Kochanek, K., McCarty, F., Moriarity, C., Shimizu, I., Strashny, A., & Ward, B. W. (2017, August). National Center for Health Statistics data presentation standards for proportions. *Vital and Health Statistics, 2*(175). [DHHS pub. no. 2017-1375; revised November 1, 2018 and further updated April 8, 2021] https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/47786