

Sacramento County 2022 Homeless Deaths Report

January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021

199 homeless deaths in 2021

*1,506 homeless deaths from 2002 – 2021
or 1 person every 5 days for the past 20 years
& 1 person every 1.8 days in 2021*



Día de Los Muertos - "Day of the Dead" - Altar, Loaves & Fishes, 2013

September 7, 2022



Dedication

*In memory of all our unhoused neighbors
who have died in our community*



The Coroner documented 199 deaths of people experiencing homelessness in 2021.

We continue to hope that this publication not only provides a proper and dignified memorial to their death, many in an untimely manner, but provides a catalyst for change fueling the political and community will to find comprehensive solutions to end homelessness in our community and prevent the tragic deaths of our unhoused neighbors.

SRCEH currently plans to hold our 9th Annual Interfaith Homeless Memorial Candlelight Vigil at City Hall
December 21, 2022 - 7 pm to 8 pm

National Homeless Memorial Day – on or around December 21 annually - sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless, National Health Care for the Homeless Council and the National Consumer Advisory Board

December 21 is the longest and darkest night of the year. December 22 begins the march towards a new year, spring and the hope that we can take action to end the senseless and untimely deaths of our unhoused neighbors

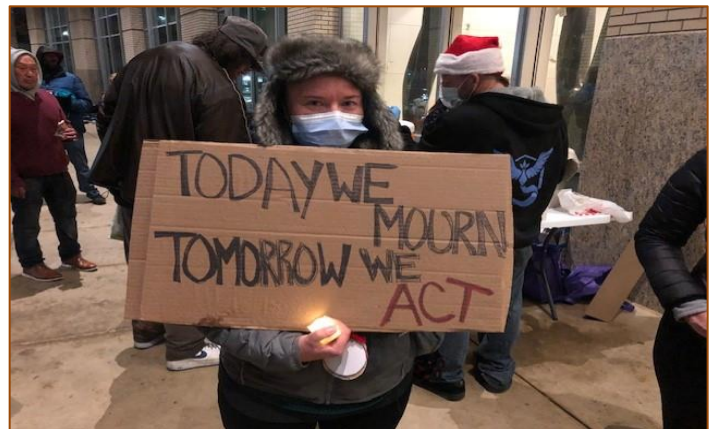


TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE NUMBER[S]
Dedication	1
Table of Contents	2
Index of Figures & Tables	3
Infographics of findings	4 - 5
I. Executive Summary	6
II. Policy Recommendations Summary	7
III. Findings:	8– 28
<i>Number of Coroner reported homeless deaths</i>	8 - 9
<i>Demographics</i>	
▪ Gender	10
▪ Age	10 – 11
▪ Infant deaths	10
▪ Ethnicity	12
▪ Gender and Ethnicity	13
<i>Location of homeless deaths</i>	14 - 15
<i>Seasonal distribution of homeless deaths</i>	16
▪ Hypothermia	
<i>Manner & Cause[s] of death</i>	17 - 28
▪ Manner of death	17 - 18
▪ Manner of death by gender	18
▪ Manner of death by ethnicity	19
▪ Major Underlying Causes of death	20 – 21
▪ COVID - 19	22
▪ Major causes of death by gender	22
▪ Major cause of death by ethnicity	23
▪ All Causes of Death	24 - 25
▪ Substance Use Disorder deaths	26
▪ Rise of Meth in homeless deaths	27
▪ Violent Causes of death	27 - 28
<i>Mortality Rates & Demographics</i>	29 – 32
▪ Major Causes of Death	29 – 31
▪ Select demographics [Gender; Age & Ethnicity]	31 - 32
IV. Policy Recommendations	33 - 35
Appendix I: Methodology & Credits	36
SRCEH Contact information	37

INDEX OF TABLES & FIGURES

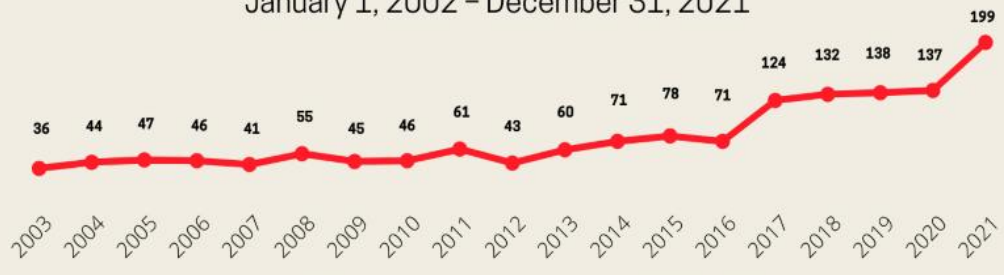
<i>Figure/Table</i>	<i>Page</i>
<i>Table 1: Number of Homeless Deaths by Year: 2002 – 2021</i>	8
<i>Figure 1: Homeless Deaths by Year: 2002 – 2021</i>	9
<i>Figure 2: Homeless Deaths by Gender: 2021</i>	10
<i>Figures 3: Homeless Deaths by Age and Gender: 2021</i>	11
<i>Table 2: Average Age of Deaths by Gender: 2021</i>	11
<i>Figure 4: Distribution of Homeless Deaths by Ethnicity: 2021</i>	12
<i>Table 3: Homeless Deaths by Ethnicity: 2017 - 2021</i>	12
<i>Figures 5: Homeless Deaths by Gender and Ethnicity: 2021</i>	13
<i>Figure 6: Location of Homeless Deaths: 2021</i>	14
<i>Figure 7: Map of Locations of Homeless Deaths: 2021</i>	15
<i>Table 4: Distribution of homeless deaths by Month: 2021</i>	16
<i>Figure 8: Seasonal Distribution of Homeless Deaths: 2021</i>	16
<i>Figure 9: Manner of Death: 2021</i>	17
<i>Figure 10: Manner of Death: 2002 – 2021</i>	17
<i>Figures 11: Manner of Death by Gender: 2021</i>	18
<i>Table 5: Manner of Death by Ethnicity: 2021</i>	19
<i>Figure 12: Major Underlying Causes of Death: 2021</i>	20
<i>Figure 13: Comparison of Major Causes of Death: 2002 – 2021</i>	20
<i>Figures 14: Major Causes of Death by Gender: 2021</i>	22
<i>Table 6: Major Causes of Death by Ethnicity: 2021</i>	23
<i>Table 7: All Causes of Homeless Deaths: 2021</i>	24
<i>Figure 15: All Causes of Homeless Deaths: 2021</i>	25
<i>Figure 15: Substance Use Disorder Deaths: 2021</i>	26
<i>Table 8: Meth Homeless Deaths: 2002 – 2021</i>	26
<i>Figure 16: Violent Causes of Deaths: 2021</i>	27
<i>Figure 17: Violent Homeless Deaths: 2002 – 2021</i>	28
<i>Table 9: County v Homeless Causes of Death per 100,000: 2021</i>	29
<i>Figure 18: Hypothermia Deaths: County v Homeless per 100,000</i>	29
<i>Figure 19: AOD Deaths; County v Homeless per 100,000</i>	29
<i>Figure 20: Homicide Deaths: County v Homeless per 100,000</i>	30
<i>Figure 21: Accidental Deaths: County v Homeless per 100,000</i>	30
<i>Figure 22: Suicide Deaths: County v Homeless per 100,000</i>	30
<i>Figure 23: Total Deaths: County v Homeless per 100,000</i>	30
<i>Figure 24: Deaths by Gender: Homeless v County</i>	31
<i>Figure 25: Deaths by Age Group: Homeless v County</i>	31
<i>Figure 26: Deaths by Select Ethnicity: Homeless v County</i>	32



SACRAMENTO REGIONAL COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

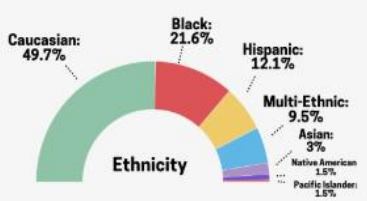
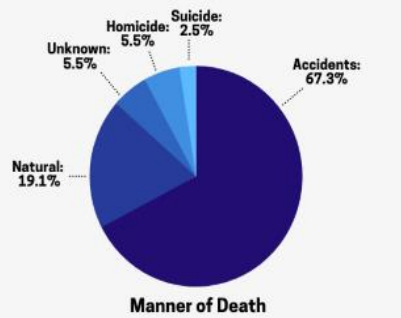
2022 Homeless Deaths Report

January 1, 2002 - December 31, 2021



1,506 Homeless Deaths from 2002-2021

Key Findings: 199 deaths in 2021



Violence Against Homeless People

Of All Violent Deaths

- 70.7% Blunt force trauma injuries
- 9.8% gunshot
- 7.3% stabbing
- 4.9% hanging

Seasonal Distribution of Deaths

Winter is the deadliest season: 30.1% of homeless, with 8 deaths from Hypothermia

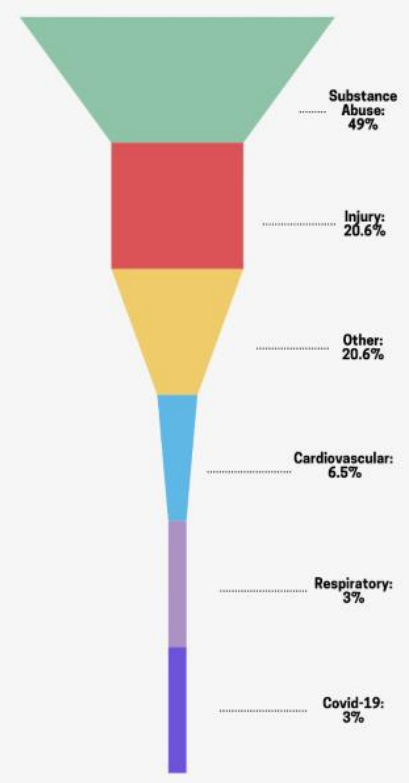
Methamphetamines

49% of all deaths were substance use, of which 79.6% were by Meth

Systemic Racism

Homeless people of color comprised 50.3 of homeless deaths

Leading Causes of Death





**SACRAMENTO REGIONAL COALITION TO
END HOMELESSNESS**

2022 Homeless Deaths Report

January 1, 2002 - December 31, 2021

Homeless Deaths vs Overall County Deaths: Mortality Rates per 100,000

Select Demographics: Gender; Age; Ethnicity County v Homeless

Deaths by Gender



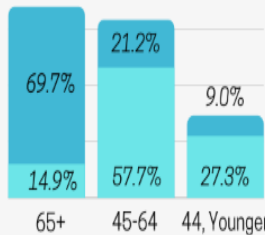
Male:
79.6%
Homeless
53.7% Overall
County



Female:
19.6%
Homeless
46.3% Overall
County

Deaths by Age Group

• Homeless • Overall



Deaths by Age Group



Caucasian
49.7%
Homeless
60.3% Overall
County



Black
21.6%
Homeless
11.4% Overall
County



Hispanic
17.6%
Homeless
12.2% Overall
County

Key Points



Overall homeless death rate in 2021 was **2.5 times higher** than the county death rate [per 100,000]



Hypothermia 215.5 times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from hypothermia



Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) 27.4 times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from AOD



Homicides 13.9 times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from homicides



Accidents 13.7 times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from accidents



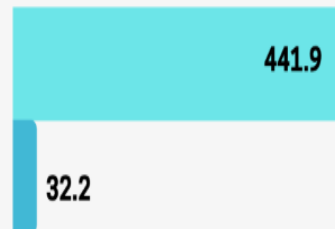
Suicides 4 times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from suicides

Major Causes of Death Mortality Rates (Homeless vs. Overall) Per 100,000

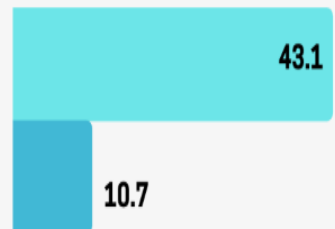
Homicide



Accidental



Suicide



■ Homeless ■ Overall County

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goal: To support our collective understanding of the tragic and often untimely deaths of our unhoused neighbors in Sacramento County and implement recommendations to prevent the untimely deaths of our unhoused neighbors in our city and county in our effort to honor all the people experiencing homelessness who have passed since SRCEH began documenting these deaths over the past 20 years.

FINDINGS:

Number of Coroner reported homeless deaths: There were 199 Coroner reported deaths of people experiencing homelessness from January 2021 - December 2021. The total from 2002 to 2021 is **1,506 homeless deaths, or roughly one homeless person's death every 5 days over a 20-year period, and one homeless person's death every 1.8 days in 2021. The average number of homeless deaths in 2021 was 1.45 higher than the number of homeless deaths in 2020 and almost 4 times higher [3.8] than from 2002 – 2016.**

Demographics:

- **Gender:** 79.9% were male and 19.6% were female;
- **Age:** 3 infants died in 2021 – 2 at birth and 1 was four months and 29 days; the average age for women was 48.2 and 51.4 for men; 45.6% of men and 60.6% of women were between 40 to 59 years old, however only 18.2% of women were 60+ compared to 30.3% of homeless men.
- **Number of lost years due to untimely deaths:** Using 75 years of age as the life expectancy national average, overall, the lives of the homeless people were cut short on average by 25% - 27 years for homeless women and 24 years for homeless men;
- **Ethnicity:** Almost half of the homeless deaths were Caucasian [49.7%], with homeless people of color [Black; Asian; Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander and Multi-Ethnic] comprising just over half [50.3%] of the homeless deaths – with Blacks comprising 21.6% of the total and 43.4% of all people of color homeless deaths.
- **Location of death:** 50% were outside; 28.3% in a hospital; 12.1% in a vehicle; 5.6% died in a motel; 3% passed away at a friend's home and 1% died in an ambulance;
- **Seasonal distribution of deaths:** Winter was the deadliest month in 2021 with 30.1% of homeless deaths in the winter followed by Fall [23.7%], Summer [23.6%] and Summer [21.7%];
- **Hypothermia:** there were 8 deaths from hypothermia in 2021, more than all the cases of hypothermia from the previous 19 years combined.

Manner and Cause[s] of death:

- **Manner of death:** 67.3% were accidents, while only 19.1% died of natural causes; 55% homicides; 2.5% suicides; and 5.5% undetermined
 - **Gender:** the manner of death for homeless women and men was very similar, with the exception of natural deaths: 23% of homeless women died natural deaths to only 18.2% for homeless men.
 - **Ethnicity:** while 47.8% of deaths by accident were white, over half [52.8%] were people of color – disproportionately Black [48.6% of all people of color]. Deaths by natural causes for white homeless people [54.1%] was almost 7 times higher than that of Hispanic homeless people, 5 times higher than that of Multi-Ethnic homeless people and 3 times higher than Black homeless people.
- **Major Underlying Cause[s] of death:** Substance use disorder deaths were the leading cause of death in 2021 [49.2%] followed by injury [20.6%], and cardiovascular disease [6.5%]; death from COVID-19 accounted for 1.5% of the total homeless deaths in 2021;
- **Substance use disorder Deaths and Gender and Ethnicity:**
 - **Gender:** Overall the percentage of homeless women and men dying from injury and substance use disorders were very similar; however, homeless men dying of cardiovascular disease was 3.4 times higher than for homeless women.
 - **Ethnicity:** of all Native Americans homeless people who died – 66% died of substance use disorders; 60.4% of all Black homeless people died of substance use disorders; 58.3% of Hispanic homeless people and 50.5% of White homeless people died of substance use disorders.
- **Meth homeless deaths:** 76.5% of all Alcohol and Other Drugs [AOD] homeless deaths in 2021 involved meth;
- **Violent deaths:** 21% of all homeless deaths in 2021 were violent deaths – the lowest percentage in 20 years - 70.7% of violent deaths were blunt force injuries, followed by gunshot wounds [9.8%], stabbings [7.3%]; thermal burns and hangings [4.9% each] and one death [2.4%] was caused by axe wounds to the head
- **Mortality Rates & Demographics:**
 - **Major Causes of Death:** Deaths by Hypothermia of Homeless people is 215.5 times higher than the County; deaths by AOD is 27.4 times higher for homeless people; Homicides of homeless people is 13.9 times higher; Accidental deaths is 13.7 times higher and Suicides is 4 times higher among homeless people than the County per 100,000 rate
 - **Select demographics:** Compared to the County overall deaths in 2021, deaths among people experiencing homelessness were more likely to be premature [under age 65], male and Black or Hispanic.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	FINDINGS
 <p>Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness Unified Regional Approach</p>	<p>City, County and surrounding cities along with a diverse set of stakeholders in the community create a comprehensive regional plan to end and prevent homelessness in 2023</p>	<p>1,506 homeless deaths over 20 years</p> <p>70%+ of people experiencing homelessness are outside due to lack of shelter and affordable housing</p>
 	<p>The City & County need to declare that Housing is A Human Right</p> <p>The City & County budgets reflect that affordable housing is a top priority in their 2023 – 24 budgets including increasing their respective affordable housing trust fund budgets to \$100 million each on an annual basis</p>	<p>72% of our unhoused neighbors are outside due to lack of affordable housing and emergency shelter</p>
	<p>Implement Sacramento Steps Forward Racial Equity Committee's recommendations in <i>Action Plan: Findings and Recommendations from the CoC Racial Equity Committee, Summer 2021</i></p>	<p>Disproportionately 50.3% of the homeless people who died in 2021 were people of color</p> <p>43% of all people of color who died in 2021 were Black</p>
	<p>Open 24/7 Respite Centers – warming; cooling and clean air centers without weather activation criteria</p>	<p>30.1% of the homeless deaths in 2021 were during the Winter;</p> <p>53.8% of the homeless deaths were in Winter & Fall</p> <p>There were 8 deaths of homeless people from Hypothermia in 2021 – 215.5 times higher than County deaths from hypothermia</p>
 	<p>Support the recommendations of the County's Meth Coalition – expand funding for alcohol and drug treatment as well as mental health programs</p> <p>Support Treatment on Demand</p> <p>Fund mental health/harm reduction outreach team to do street outreach to encampments</p> <p>The City & County adopt a Trauma-Informed Approach to outreach and engagement efforts</p>	<p>Meth deaths accounted for 37.7% of the alcohol and drug [AOD] related deaths in 2021</p> <p>Of all AOD deaths of homeless people in 2021 – 76.5% involved Meth</p>
	<p>The city & County stop the continued criminalization of our unhoused neighbors through the passage of punitive ordinances in an effort to circumvent the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in <i>Martin v Boise</i> that ruled that efforts to criminalize people experiencing homelessness violates the 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution</p>	<p>According to the 2022 Sacramento Point-In-Time Count, 40% of all unsheltered adults reported having to relocate their tents or vehicles due to requests from law enforcement.</p>

III. FINDINGS

**Number of Coroner reported deaths:
1 death every 5 days for 20 years and
in 2021 1 death every 1.8 days**

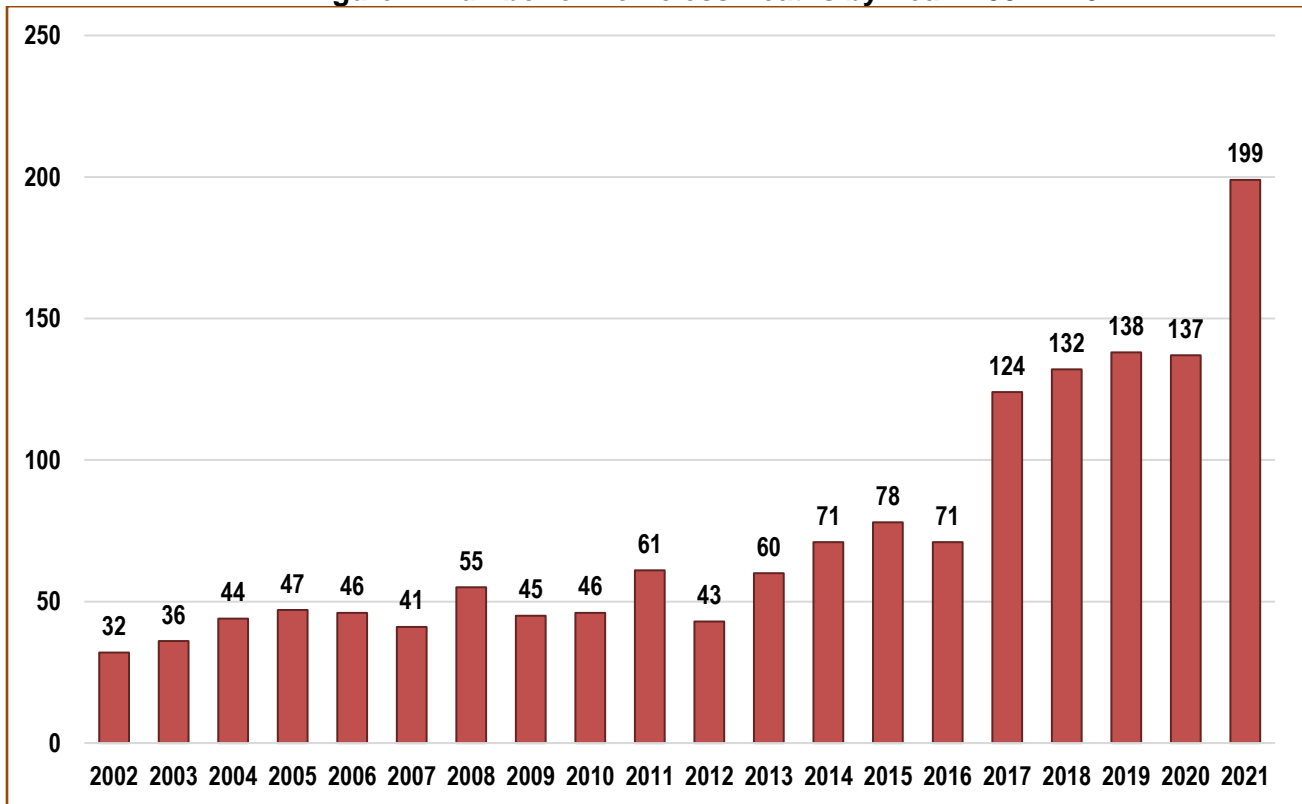
There were **199** Coroner reported deaths of homeless people from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, for a total of **1,506 deaths from 2002 to 2021**. See Table 1 below for the number of deaths by year and Figure 1 for a year-by-year graph.

13.2% of all homeless deaths were in 2021, with 48.5% of homeless deaths over the past 20 years occurring in the past five years [2017 - 2021].

Table 1: Number of Homeless Deaths by Year: 2002 to 2021

Year	Number of Deaths	% Total
2002	32	2.1%
2003	36	2.4%
2004	44	2.9%
2005	47	3.1%
2006	46	3.1%
2007	41	2.7%
2008	55	3.7%
2009	45	2.9%
2010	46	3.1%
2011	61	4.1%
2012	43	2.9%
2013	60	3.9%
2014	71	4.7%
2015	78	5.2%
2016	71	4.7%
2017	124	8.2%
2018	132	8.8%
2019	138	9.2%
2020	137	9.1%
2021	199	13.2%
Total	1,506	100%

Figure 1: Number of Homeless Deaths by Year: 2002 – 2021



Key Points:

- From 2002 - 2016 the average number of homeless deaths was 52
- The average number of homeless deaths from 2017 – 2021 increased to 146
- 199 homeless deaths in 2021 is 1.45 times higher than the number of homeless deaths in 2020

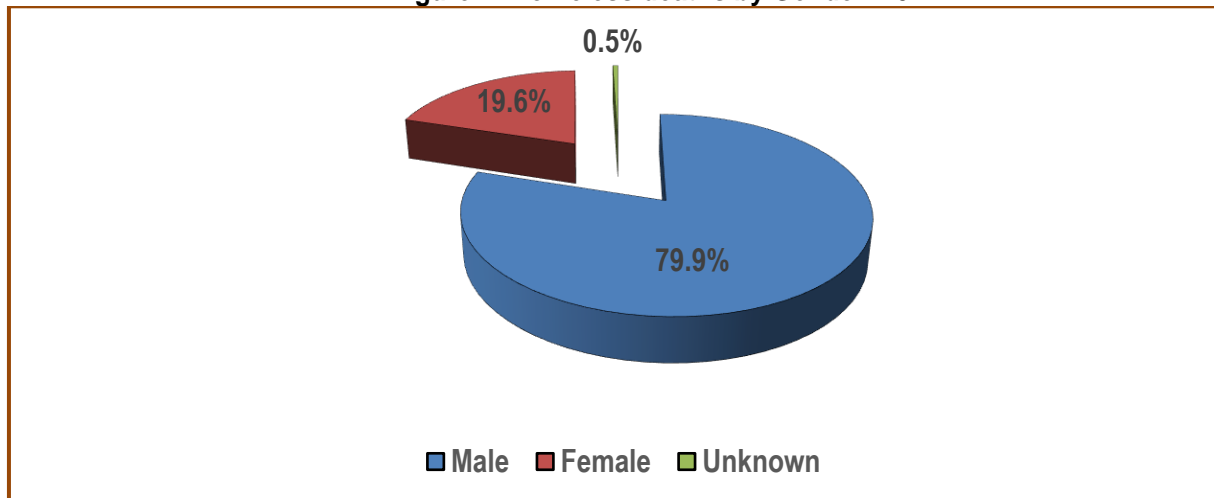
On average 2.8 times increase in the average number of homeless deaths in the last five years [146] compared to the previous 15 years [52]

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender

Overwhelmingly the percentage of homeless deaths were male, 159 homeless men, or 79.9%, while there were 39 homeless female deaths, or 19.6%; while for 1 infant [.05%] the gender was unknown [Figure 2].

Figure 2: Homeless deaths by Gender: 2021



Continued increase in homeless female deaths from 2016 to 2020 and decline in 2021

Key Points:

- From 2002 – 2015 the average percentage of homeless females was 13.5%
- This increased to 18% in 2016; 21% in 2017; 24% in 2018; 26% in 2019 and 27.7% in 2020
- Or 2020 doubled the 2002 – 2015 average
- There was a decline of female homeless deaths in 2021 to 19.6% but was still 1.6 times higher than the 2002 – 2015 average

Age

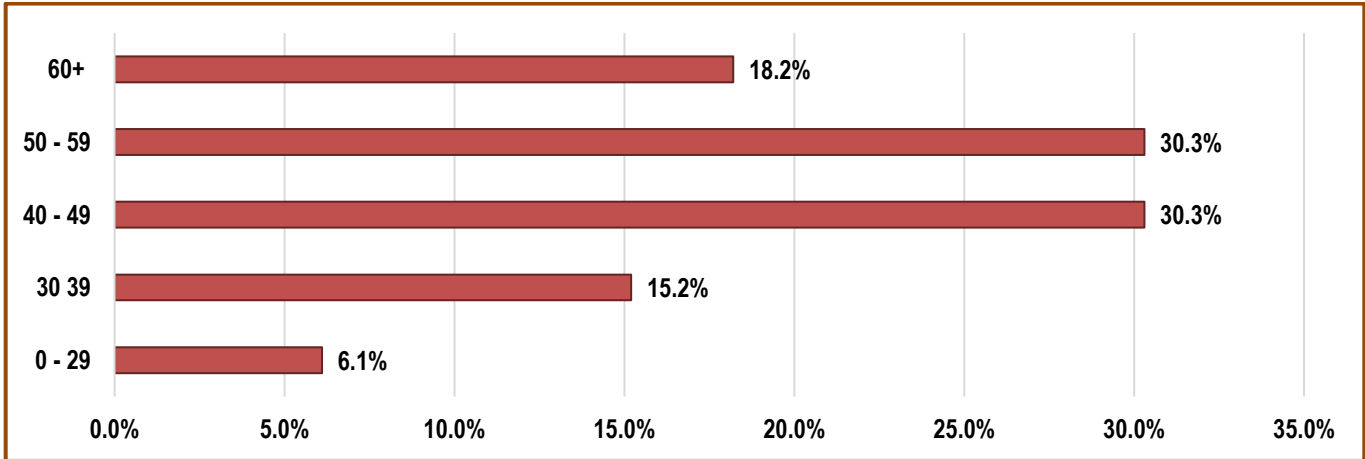
Figure 3 shows the age range of the homeless deaths by age category by gender. Overall, homeless women died at an earlier age than homeless men, with only 18.2% of homeless women living to 60+ years, compared to 30.3% of homeless men. [Note: for 6 homeless women their ages were unknown for a total of 33; for homeless men, 16 ages were unknown for a total of 144]

Infant deaths

Tragically, there were 3 infant deaths in 2022, two died at birth and one died 4 at four months and 29 days. Gender: All the infants were male; Ethnicity: one infant was white; one Hispanic and one the ethnicity was not reported

Figures 3: Homeless Deaths by Age Category and Gender: 2021

Homeless Women: Deaths by Age: 2021



Homeless Men: Deaths by Age: 2021

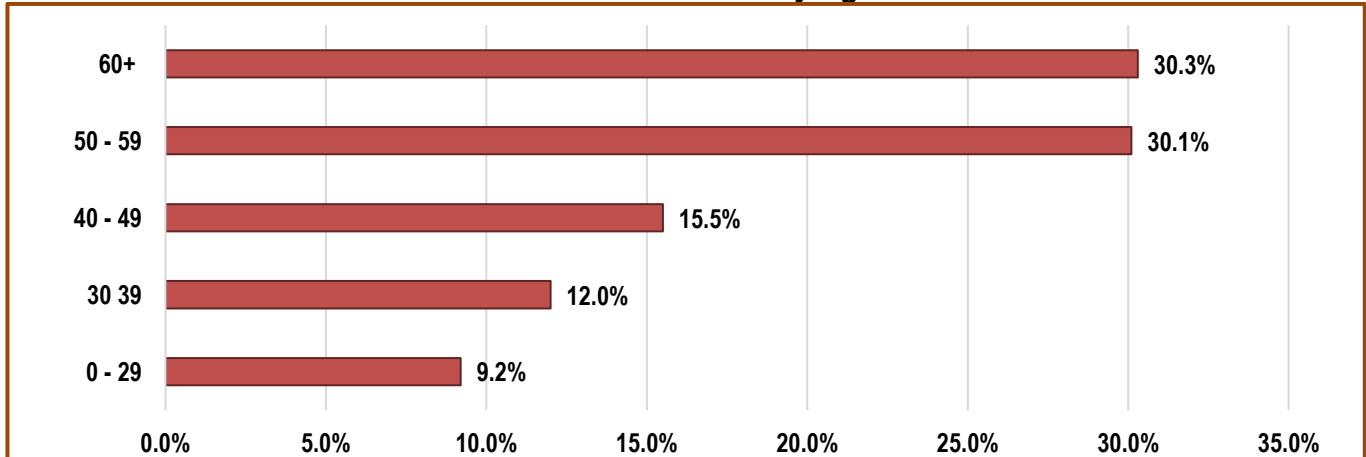


Table 2 indicates the average age of homeless deaths by gender. In 2021 the average age of homeless women was 48.7 years while for homeless men it was 51.4. This is consistent with previous homeless deaths reports.

Table 2: Average age of deaths by gender: 2021

GENDER	AGE			N	%
	Minimum	Maximum	Average		
Female	26	67	48.2	33	19.6%
Male	0	75	51.4	144	72.3%

Homeless Life Expectancy: Life cut short by an average of 25%

Using the national life expectancy average of 75 years old, homeless lives in Sacramento are cut short by an average of about 25% or about 27 years for homeless women and 24 years for homeless men.

Ethnicity

Figure 4 shows the ethnic distribution of homeless deaths in 2021. 49.7% were Caucasian; 21.6% Black; 12.1% Hispanic; 9.5% multi-ethnic; 3% Asian; and 1.5% for both Native American and Pacific Islander and 1% unknown ethnicity. Table 3 below indicates the ethnic distribution of homeless deaths from 2017 – 2021.

Figure 4: Distribution of Homeless Deaths by Ethnicity: 2021

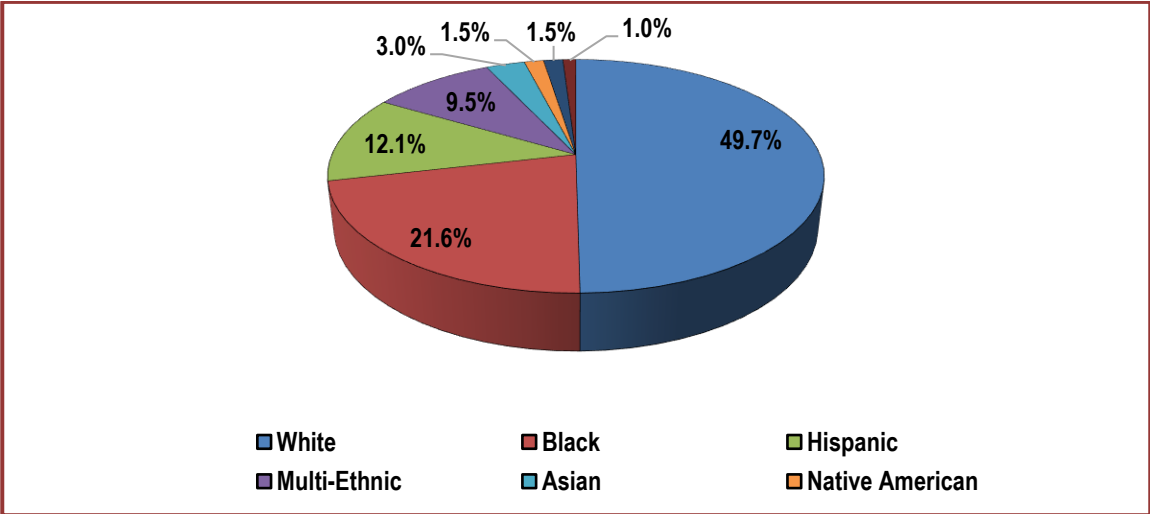


Table 3: Ethnic Distribution of Homeless Deaths: Comparing 2017 through 2021: Compared to General Population in Sacramento County

Ethnicity	Year					General Population: County	General Population: City
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021	2021
Caucasian	59%	63%	66%	59.6%	49.7%	61.4%	43.5%
Black	26%	16%	28%	19.6%	21.6%	10.9%	13.5%
Multi-Ethnic	-	6%	-	9.6%	9.5%	7%	9.6%
Hispanic	8%	9%	9%	6.6%	12.1%	24.4%	28.3%
Asian	5%	4%	1%	2.9%	3%	17.8%	19.3%
Native American	-	-	1%	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	.8%

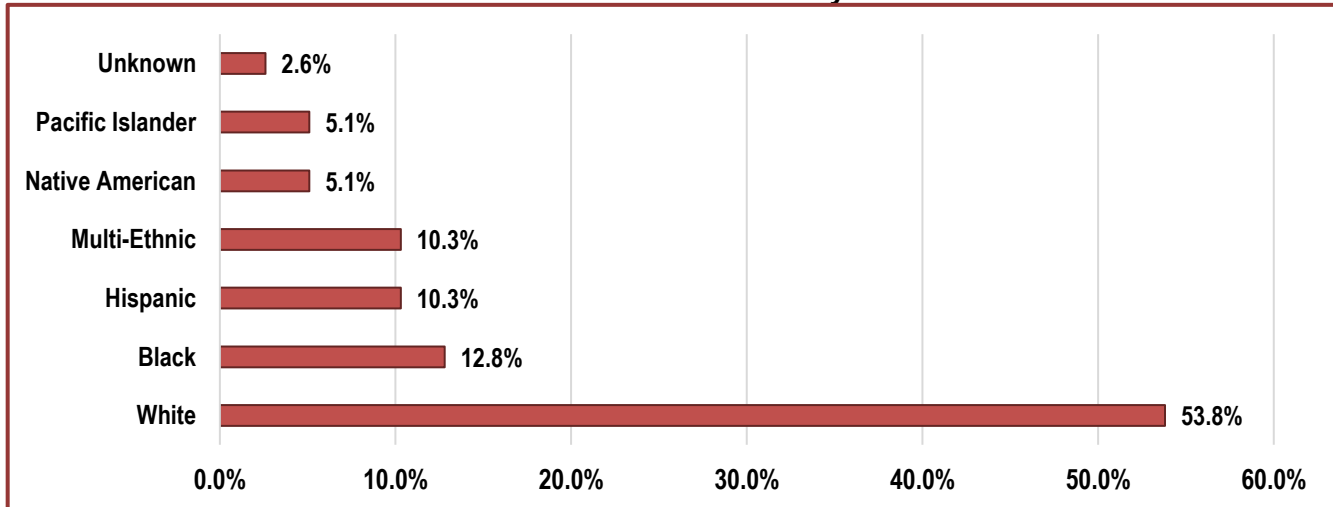
Key findings:

- Overall, from 2017 – 2021: Black, Native American and Multi-Ethnic Homeless People of Color are over-represented in the deaths of people experiencing homelessness compared to the general population in the County and City
- 2021 was the first year of the 5 years that homeless People of Color combined was greater than 50% [50.3%]; while White homeless people were less than 50% [49.7%]
- Hispanic homeless deaths in 2021 were 1.8 times higher than the Hispanic homeless deaths in 2020

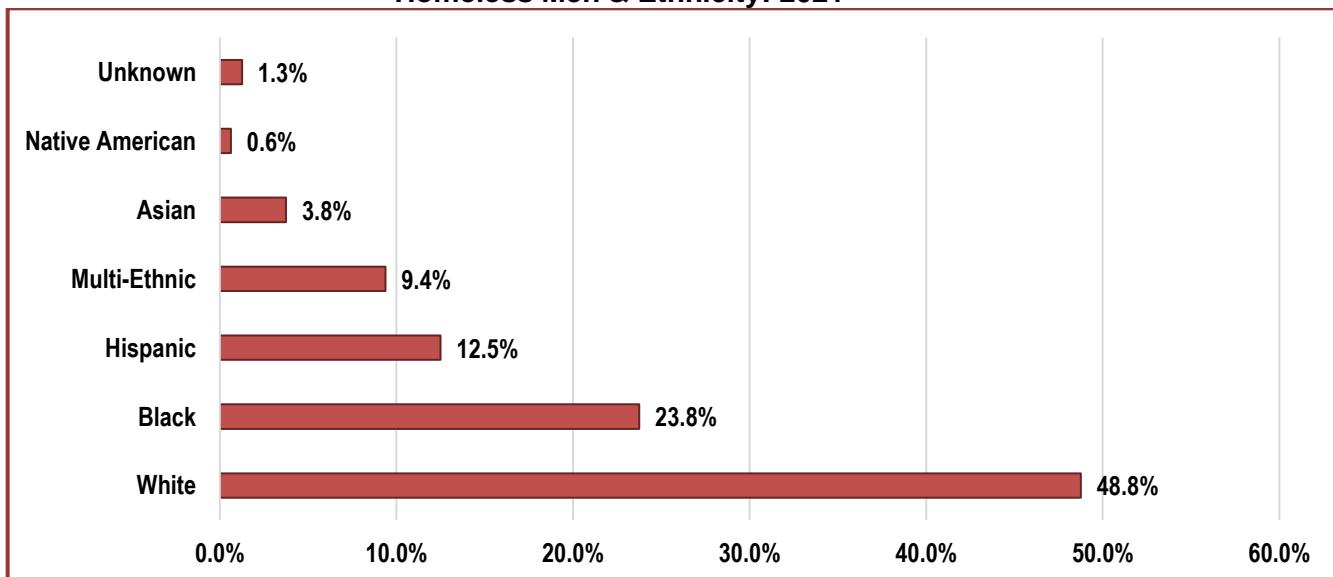
Figures 5 below compares the ethnicity of homeless men to homeless women who died in 2021.

Figures 5: Deaths of Homeless Women and Men & Ethnicity: 2021

Homeless Women & Ethnicity: 2021



Homeless Men & Ethnicity: 2021



Key findings:

- Overall, the percentages of homeless women and men and ethnicity are very similar, with two exceptions:
 - ✓ The percentage of homeless black men is nearly double the percentage of homeless black female deaths [23.8% to 12.8% respectively]
 - ✓ The percentage of white male homeless deaths is slightly less than white female homeless deaths [48.8% to 53.8% respectively]

Location of Homeless Deaths

As Figure 6 below indicates, more than half of people experiencing homelessness died outdoors [50% – on the sidewalk, in a field etc.]. Almost 30% [28.3%] passed away in a local hospital; while 12.1% died in a vehicle; 5.6% passed away in a motel; 3% died at a friend's home and 1% passed away in an ambulance.

Figure 6: Location of Homeless Deaths: 2021

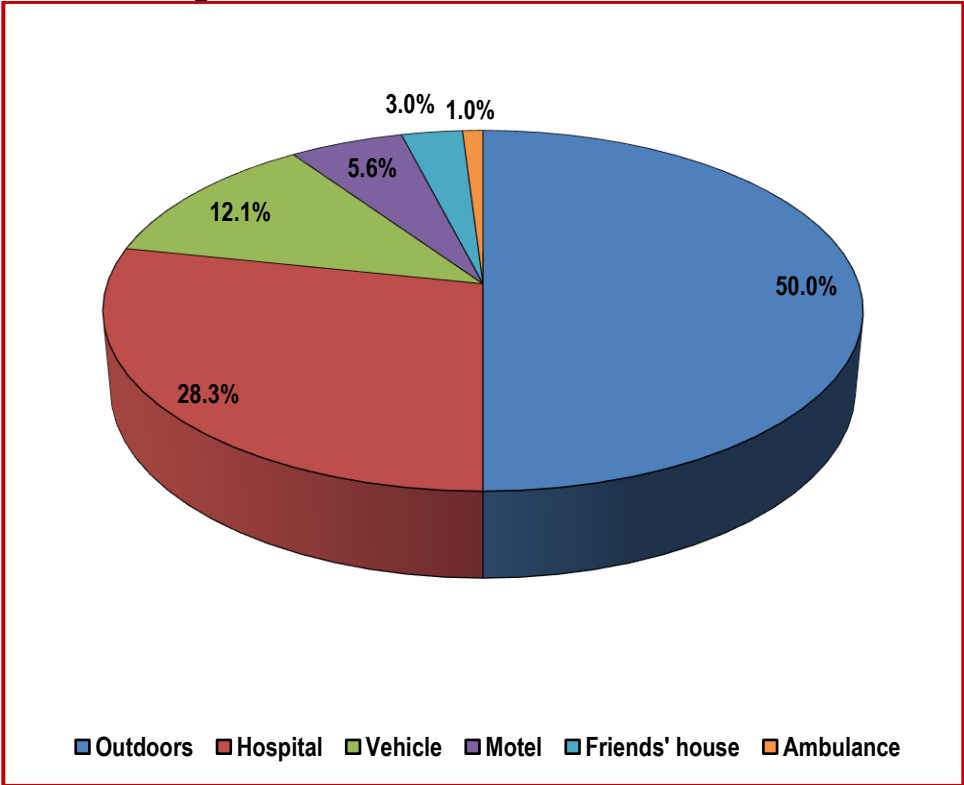
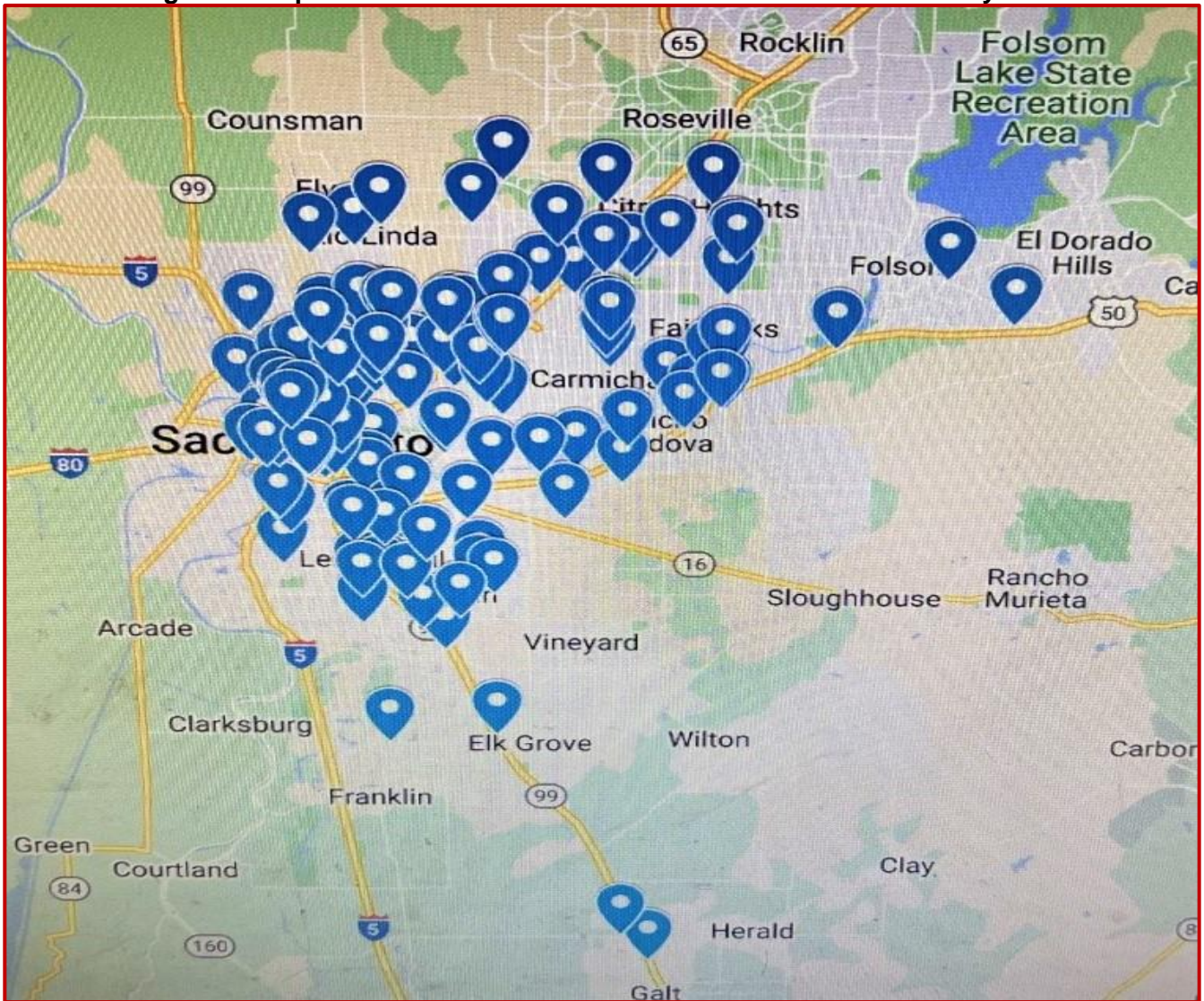


Figure 7 below is a map of the locations of the deaths of people experiencing homelessness in Sacramento County in 2021. Similar to previous homeless deaths reports, many of the deaths of our unhoused neighbors are along transportation corridors.

Figure 7: Map of Locations of Homeless Deaths: Sacramento County 2021



Seasonal Distribution of Homeless Deaths

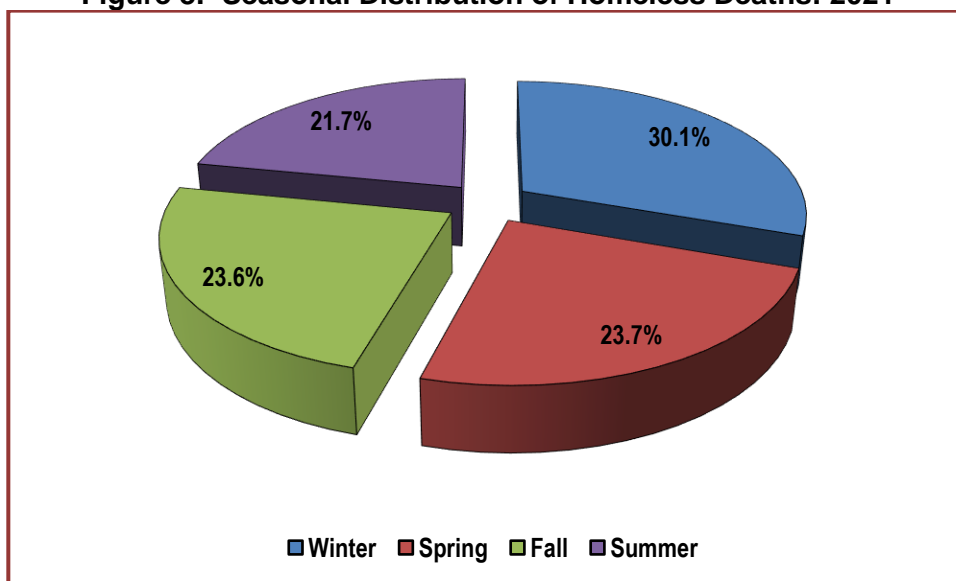
Table 4 below show the distribution of homeless deaths by each month of the year in 2021. As the table indicates, the deadliest months for people experiencing homelessness in 2021 was November [23]; December [22] and February [20]

Table 4: Distribution of homeless deaths by month: 2021

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
18	20	18	12	17	18
July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	16	11	14	23	22

As Figure 8 below indicates, Winter was the deadliest season for people experiencing homelessness [30.1%]; followed by Fall, Summer and Spring [23.6%; 21.7% and 23.7%] respectively.

Figure 8: Seasonal Distribution of Homeless Deaths: 2021



Hypothermia Deaths

Key points:

- 8 people experiencing homelessness died on hypothermia in 2022 – the highest number in the 20 year period of these reports
- There was one death from hypothermia in January, February and March and 4 deaths from hypothermia in December 2021.

MANNER AND CAUSES OF DEATH

MANNER OF DEATH

The manner of death is the category of death indicated on the death certificate, which includes the following five categories: *Natural*, *Accident [which include substance use disorders deaths/overdose]*, *Suicide*, *Homicide*, and *Unknown*.

As Figure 9 shows, only 19.1% of the homeless deaths are natural, with only 5.5% undetermined, leaving 75.4% of the deaths to Accidents [67.3%], Homicides [5.5%] and Suicides [2.5%] Figure 10 compares the manner of death from 2002 – 2021.

Figure 9: Manner of Death: 2021

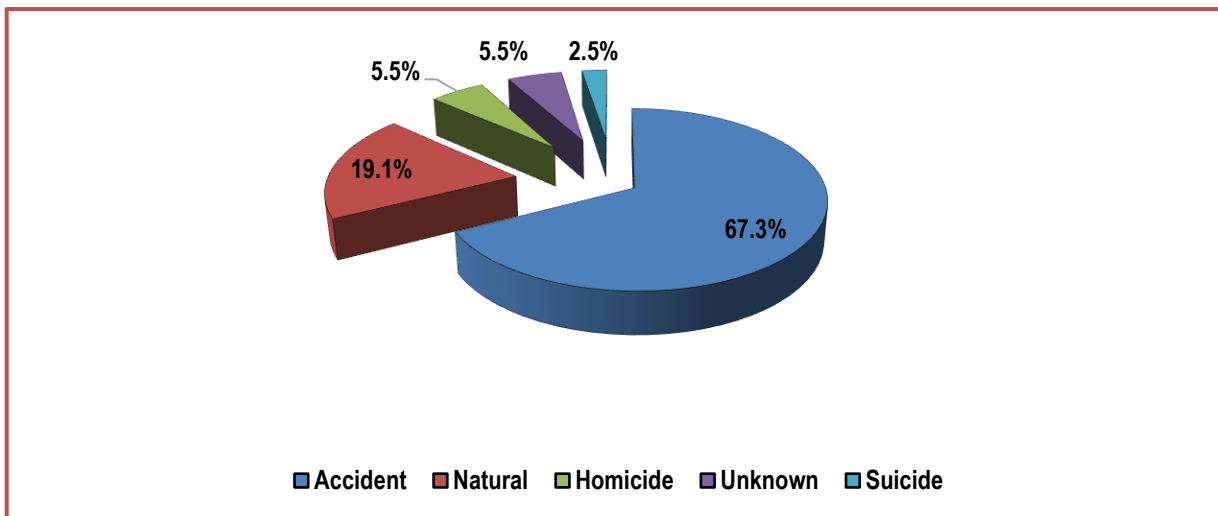
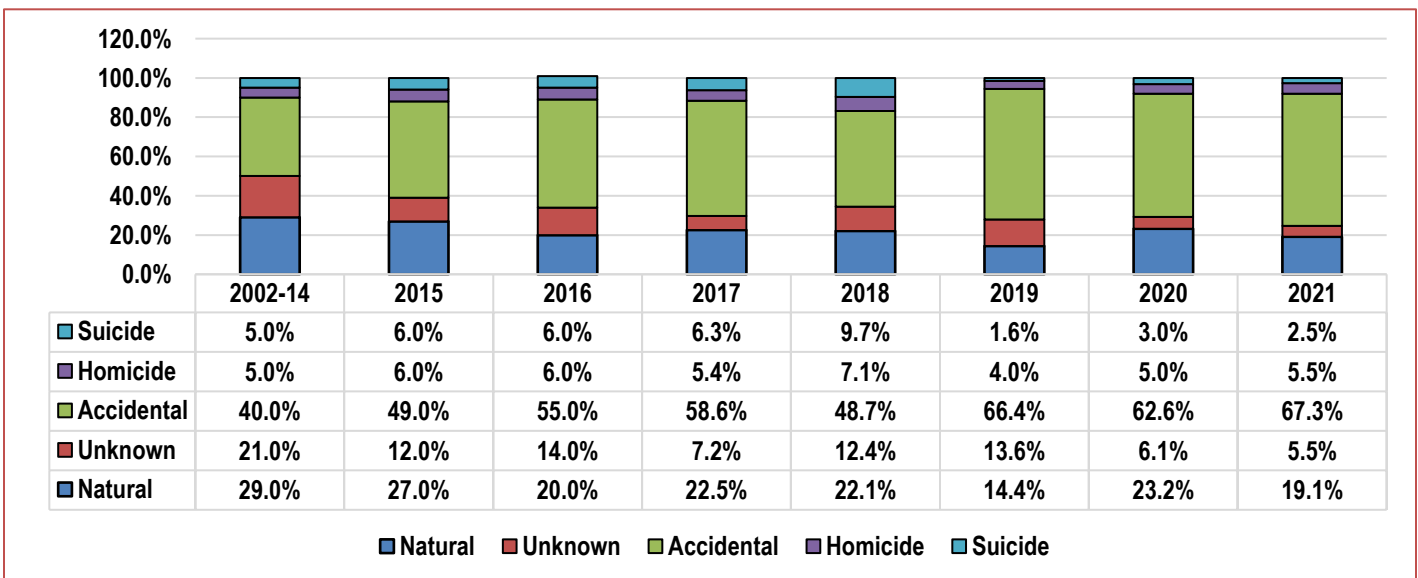


Figure 10: Manner of Death: 2002-2014 – 2021 Comparisons



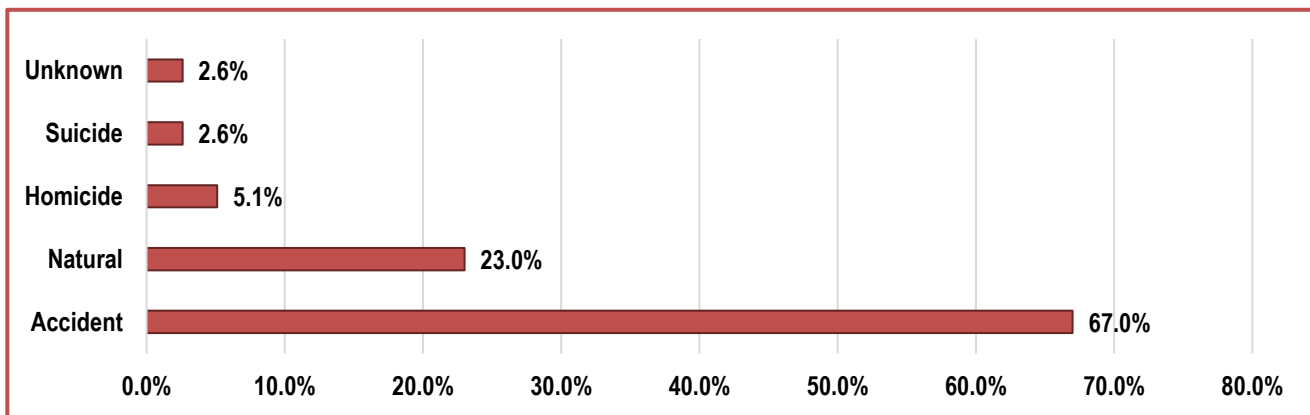
Key points: Comparing 2021 to 2002 – 2020 manner of deaths – the most significant changes were:

- A steep decline in natural deaths in 2019 – and in 2020 returning to the previous average of approximately 23% and then dipping down to 19.1% in 2021
- A continued sharp increase in accidental deaths – from an average of 50.1 from 2002 – 2018 to an average of 65.4% for 2019 – 2021; with 2021 being the highest in accidental deaths in 20 years [67.3%]
- An increase in homicides in 2021 compared to 2019 & 2020
- Continued the decline in percentage of suicides in 2021 from the previous two years

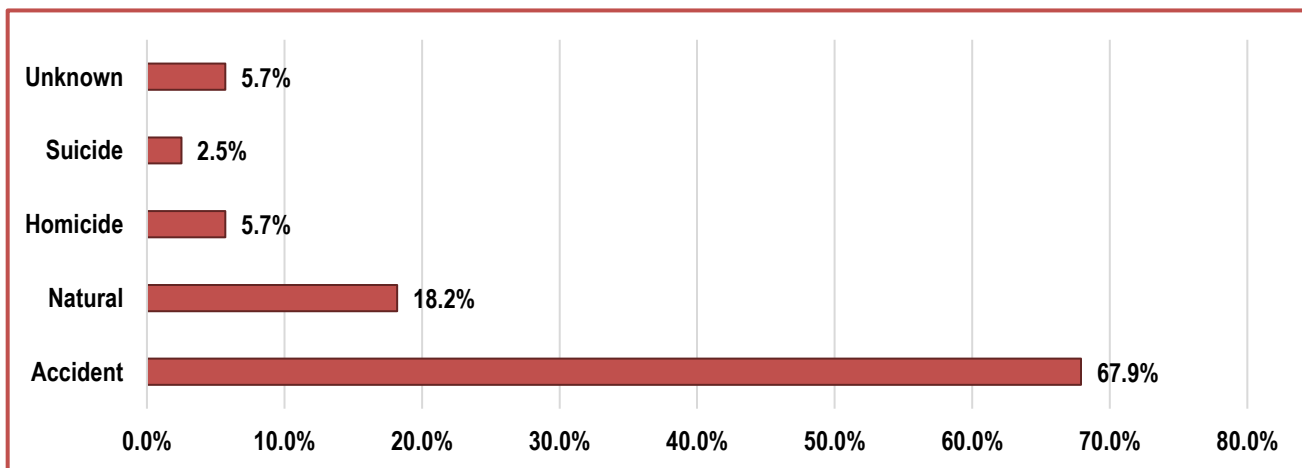
Manner of Death by Gender

Figures 11 compares the manner of death by gender.

Figures 11: Manner of death: Homeless Women: 2021



Manner of death: Homeless Men: 2021



Key points: Comparing Manner of Death by gender: Overall in 2021 the manner of death for women and men were very similar, with the exception of natural deaths – natural deaths for homeless women were 23% compared to only 18.2% for homeless men

Manner of Death by Ethnicity

Table 5 compares the manner of death by ethnicity.

Table 5: Manner of death by ethnicity: 2021

Manner of death	Ethnicity							
	Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Pacific Islander	Multi-Ethnic	Unknown
Accident	47.8%	25.4%	2.9%	14.2%	1.5%	.07%	7.5	-
Unknown	30%	20%	-	10%	-	-	30%	10%
Natural	54.1%	18.1%	2%	8.1%	2%	2%	10.8%	2%
Homicide	60%	-	-	40%	-	-	-	-
Suicide	60%	-	-	40%	-	-	-	-

Key Points:

- While 47.8% of deaths by accident were white; over half [52.8%] were people of color disproportionately Black [48.6% of total people of color]; 27.1% Hispanic and 14.3% Multi-Ethnic
- Deaths by natural causes for white homeless people [54.1%] is almost 7 times higher than that of Hispanic homeless people; 5 times higher than that of Multi-Ethnic homeless people and 3 times higher than Black homeless people

MAJOR UNDERLYING CAUSES OF DEATH

Figure 12 details the major underlying causes of death of people experiencing homelessness in 2021. Substance use disorder was the leading cause [49.2%], followed by injury [20.6%] cardiovascular disease [6.5%] and respiratory disease, including COVID-19 [3.1%]. These four major causes accounted for 79.4% of all the deaths of people experiencing homelessness in 2021.

Figure 13 compares the major causes of death from 2002 to 2021.

Figure 12: Major Underlying Causes of Death of Homeless People: 2021

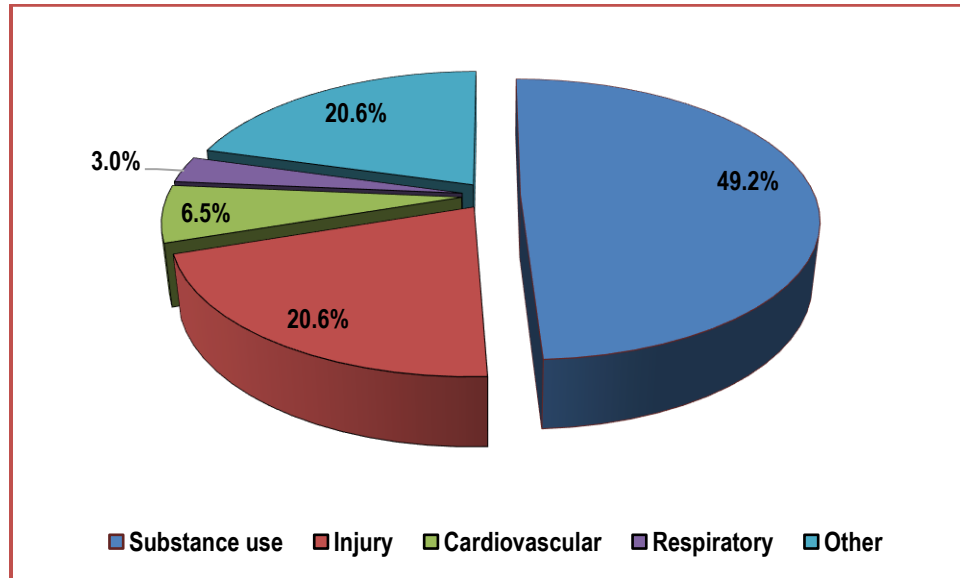
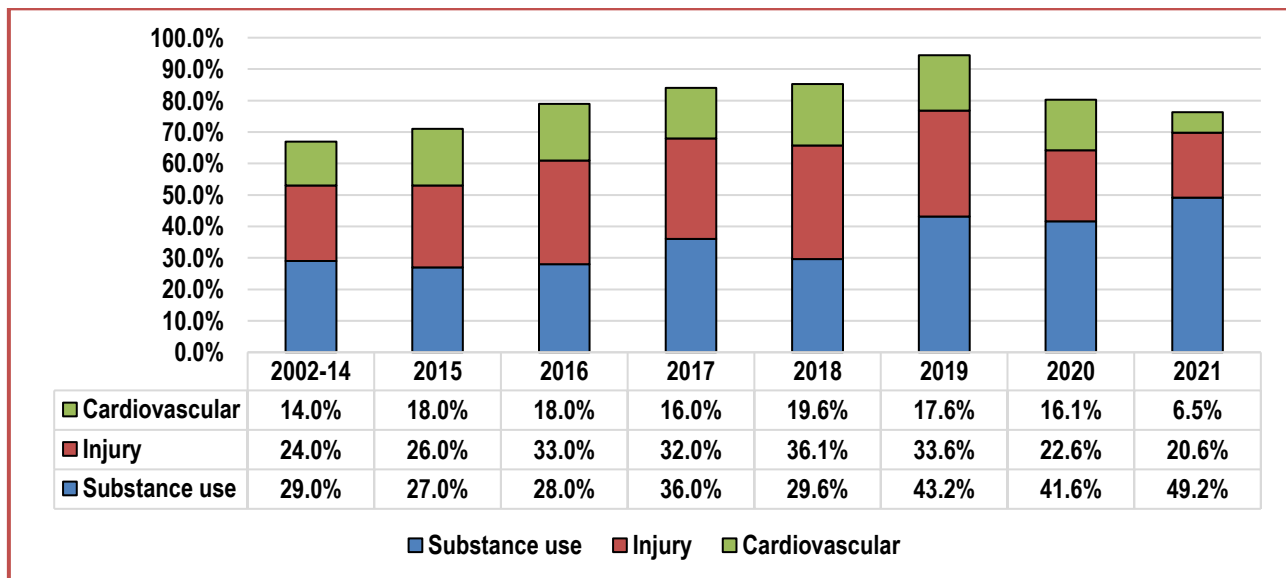


Figure 13: Comparison of major causes of death from 2002-14; 2015 - 2021



Key Points:

- In 2021, substance use disorder deaths increased 1.64 times over the 2002 – 2018 average of 30% - accounting for almost half [49.2%] of all deaths of people experiencing homelessness in 2021
- Injuries declined in 2021 or a second year in a row but still remain the 2nd major cause of death for people experiencing homelessness
- Cardiovascular deaths declined sharply in 2021 to only 6.5%, more than half the average over 19years of 17%

COVID-19 DEATHS

Key Point:

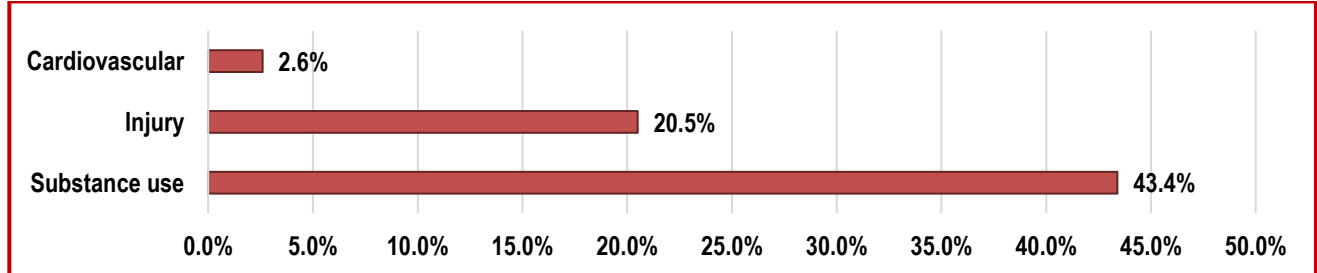
- There 3 deaths [1.5% of the total] from complications due to COVID-19

Major Causes of Death by Gender

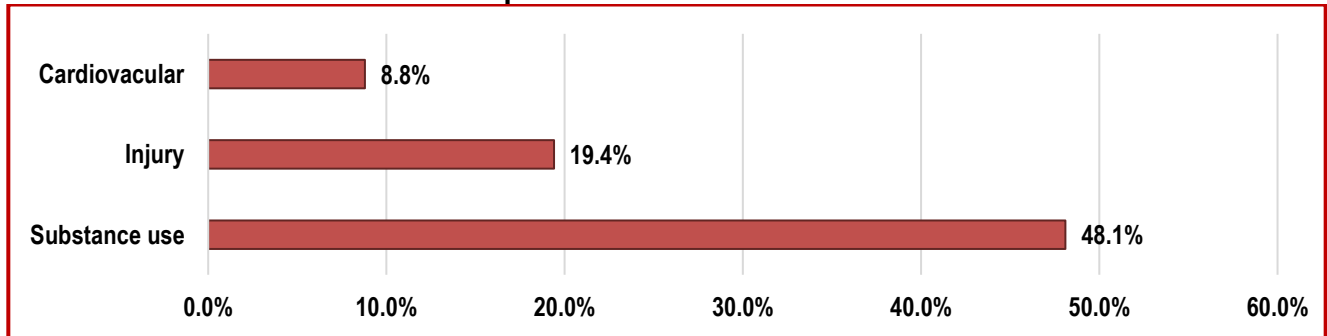
Figures 14 compares the top three causes of death by gender.

Figures 14: Major causes of death by gender

Homeless Women: Top 3 Causes of Death: % of Total Women: 2021



Homeless Men: Top 3 Causes of Death: % of Total Men: 2021



Key Points:

- Overall, the percentage of homeless women and men dying of injury and substance use disorders in 2021 were very similar;
- Overall, the trend from 2020 of about 3.4 times as many homeless men dying of cardiovascular disease than homeless women continued in 2021 [12.4% and 3.6% respectively in 2020 and 8.8% and 2.6% respectively in 2021]

Major Causes of Death by Ethnicity

Table 6 compares the top three causes of death by ethnicity.

Table 6: Top 3 Causes of Death by Ethnicity: 2021

3 Major Causes of death	Ethnicity											
	White		Black		Hispanic		Native American		Asian		Multi-ethnic	
	% ethnicity	% total	% ethnicity	% total	% ethnicity	% total	% ethnicity	% total	% ethnicity	% total	% ethnicity	% total
Substance use disorders	50.5%	25.1%	60.4%	13.1%	58.3%	7%	66%	1%	16.7%	.05%	31.8%	3%
Injury	22.2%	11.1%	16.2%	3.5%	33.3%	4%	-	-	33.3%	1%	21%	2%
Cardiovascular	8.1%	4%	4.6%	1%	4.2%	.05%	-	-	16.7%	.05%	5.2%	.05%

Key Points:

- Of all Native American homeless people who died - 66% died from substance use disorders; of all Black homeless people who died - 60.4% died of substance use disorders; of all Hispanic homeless people who died – 58.3% died of substance use disorders while 50.5% of all white homeless people died of substance use disorders
- While 11.1% of the total deaths by injury were White; about the same percentage [10.5] were people of color – with a third of all deaths of Hispanic homeless people was by injury

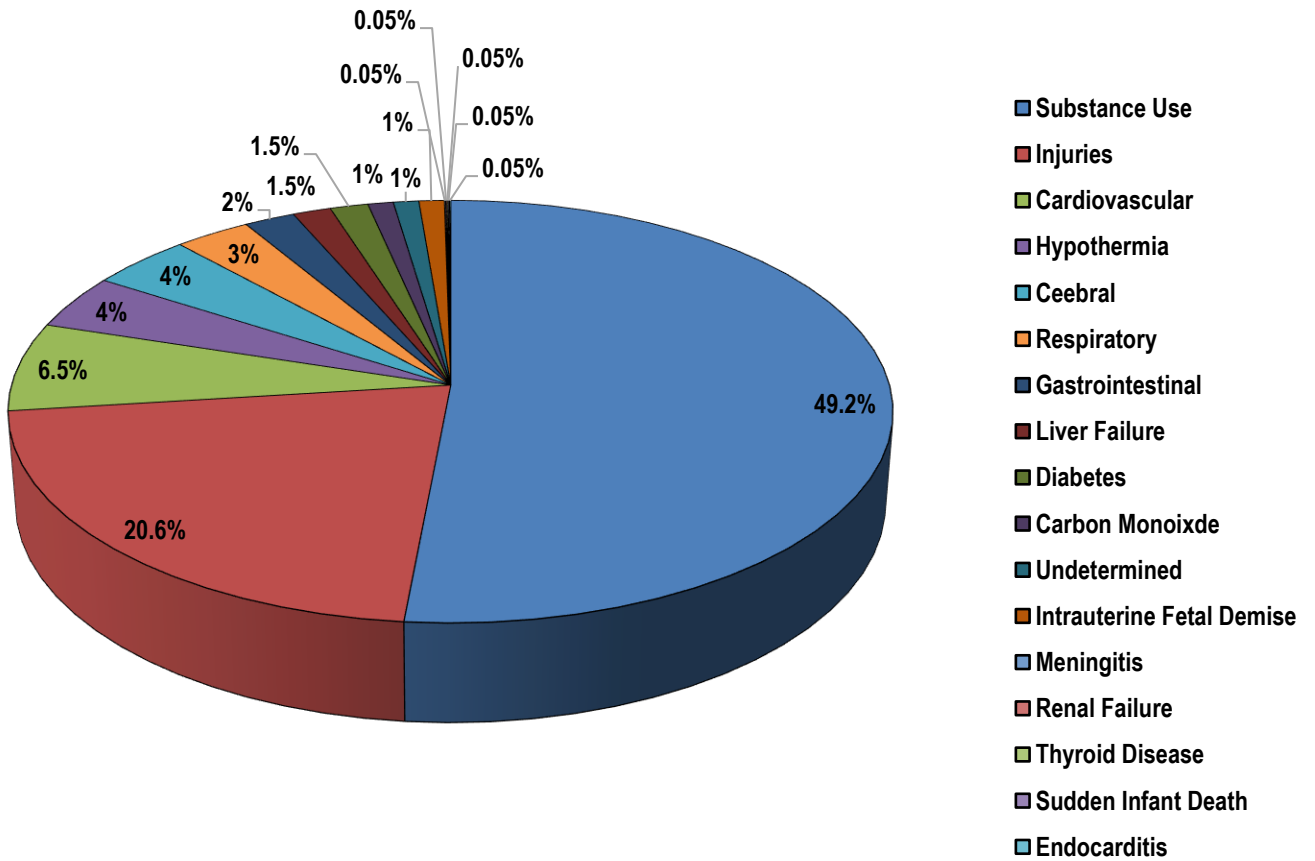
All Causes of Death

Table 7 below identifies all causes of homeless deaths in 2021, with the top three being Meth [24.1%]; Blunt force head injuries [14.6%] and Methamphetamines [Meth] & Fentanyl [12.1%], while Figure 15 presents a pie chart of all the causes of homeless deaths in 2021.

Table 7: All Causes of homeless deaths in 2021

Causes of Death	# of Homeless Number of Deaths in 2021	% of Total Homeless Deaths in 2021
Substance use disorders: Total 98		49.2%
Meth	48	24.1%
Meth & Fentanyl	24	12.1%
Mixed drugs	12	6%
Alcohol	8	4%
Meth & Heroin	3	1.5%
Cocaine	2	1%
Heroin	1	.05%
Injuries: Total 41		20.6%
Blunt Force Head Injuries	29	14.6%
Gunshots	4	2%
Stabbing	3	1.5%
Thermal burns	2	1%
Hangings	2	1%
Chop wounds [axe]	1	.05%
Cardiovascular	13	6.5%
Hypothermia	8	4%
Cerebral	8	4%
Respiratory – 3 from COVID 9	6	3%
Gastrointestinal	4	2%
Liver Failure	3	1.5%
Diabetes	3	1.5%
Carbon Monoxide	2	1%
Undetermined	2	1%
Sepsis	2	1%
Asphyxia	2	1%
Intrauterine Fetal Demise	2	1%
Meningitis	1	.05%
Renal failure	1	.05%
Thyroid disease	1	.05%
Sudden Infant Death	1	.05%
Endocarditis	1	.05%
Total	199	100%

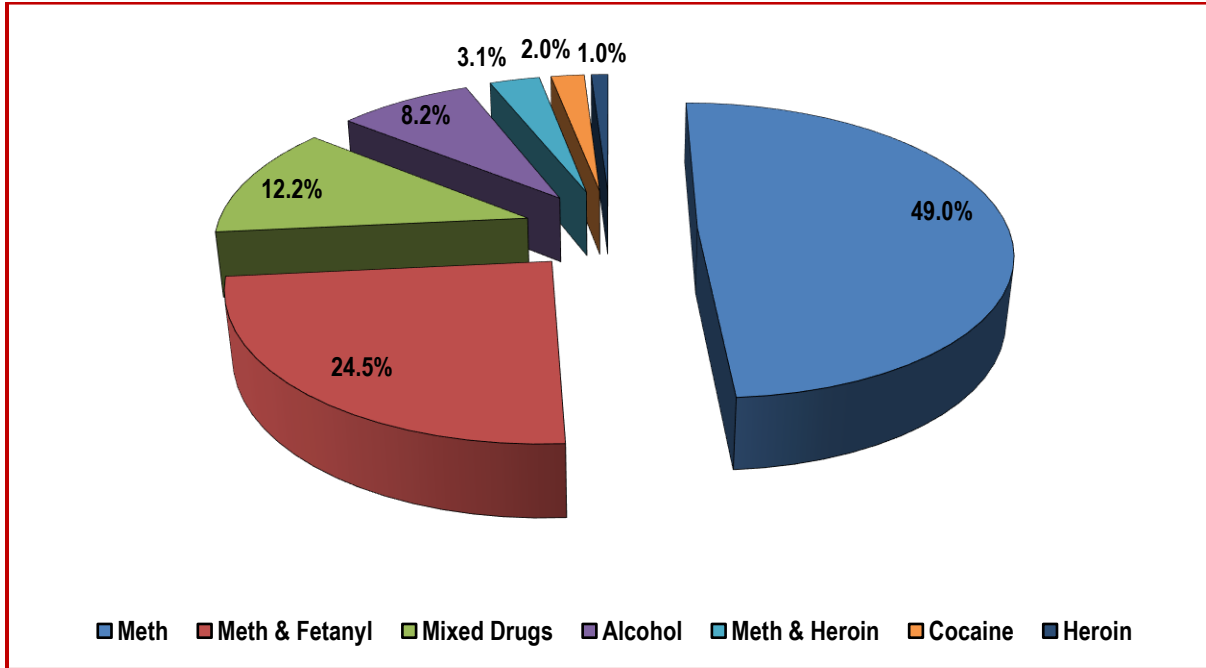
Figure 15: All Causes of Homeless Deaths: 2021



Substance Use Disorder Deaths

Figure 16 shows the types of substances that caused the deaths of homeless women and men with methamphetamines [meth] being the leading drug, causing 52.6% of the substance use disorder related deaths in 2021.

Figure 15: Substance use disorder deaths of homeless women and men in 2021



The Rise of Methamphetamines in Homeless Deaths

Table 8 documents the dramatic rise in homeless deaths due to methamphetamine [Meth] intoxication.

Table 8: Increase in Meth in Homeless Deaths: 2002 - 2021

	# of homeless deaths	# and % of AOD Homeless deaths	# of Meth involved deaths	% of Meth Deaths of all AOD deaths	% Meth deaths of total deaths
2002 -2014	627	175 28%	25	14.3%	4%
2015	78	21 27%	11	52%	14%
2016	71	20 28%	8	40%	11%
2017	124	45 36%	27	60%	21.8%
2018	132	32 24%	28	87.5%	21.2%
2019	138	54 34%	43	79.6%	31.2%
2020	137	57 41.6%	30	52.6%	21.9%
2021	199	98 49.2%	75	76.5%	37.7%
Total	1,506	502 33.3%	247	49.2%	16.4%

Key Points:

- Homeless deaths by Alcohol and Drugs [AOD] continued to increase in 2021 to almost half of all deaths [49.2%] – an increase of 1.7 times over the 2002 – 2014 period
- 76.5% of all AOD homeless deaths involved meth and accounted for almost 40% [37.7%] of all homeless deaths in 2021

Violent Causes of Death

Figure 17 indicates that of the 41 violent deaths of homeless people in 2021, 70.7% were blunt force injuries [hit over the head; hit by a train or automobile]; while 9.8% of the deaths were gunshot wounds; 7.3% stabbings; 4.9% each for thermal burns and hangings and one death [2.4%] was caused by chop wounds to the head from an axe.

Figure 16: Violent Causes of Death for homeless women and men: 2021

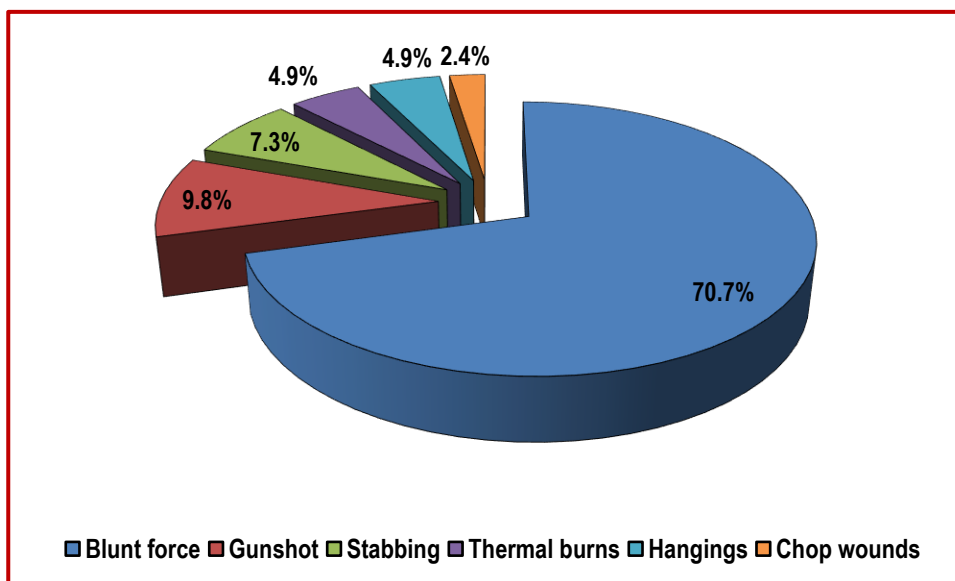
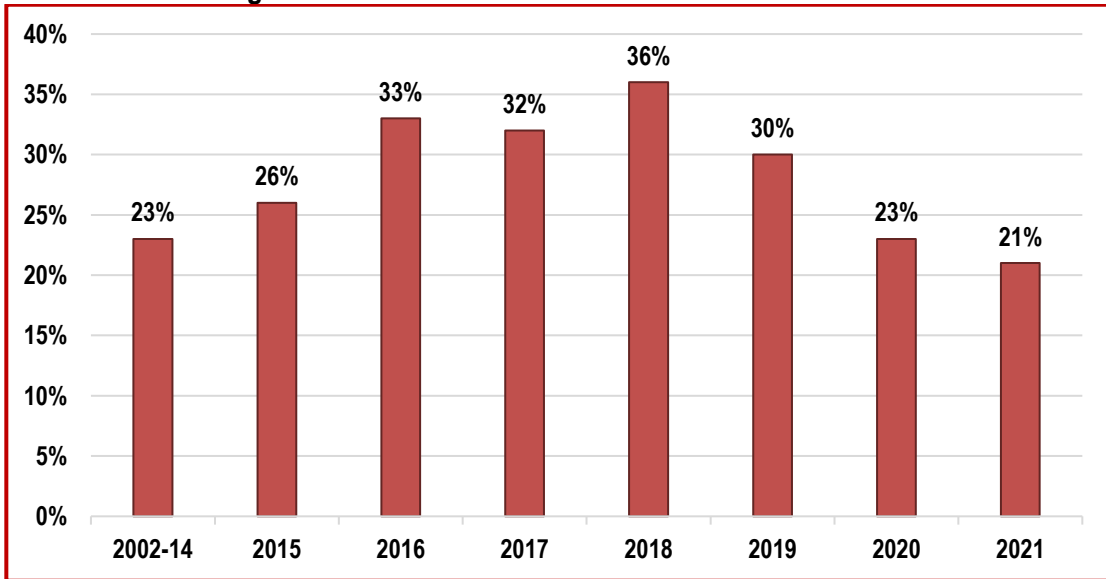


Figure 17 indicates the increase from 2002 – 2014 of violent homeless deaths from 23% to a four-year average [2016 – 2019] of 33% and declining to 23% in 2020 and declined slightly in 2021 to 21% of all homeless deaths, the lowest percentage in 20 years.

Figure 17: Violent homeless deaths from 2002 to 2021



MORTALITY RATES & DEMOGRAPHICS: HOMELESS DEATHS TO SACRAMENTO COUNTY OVERALL DEATHS: 2021

Major Causes of Death Mortality Rates

Table 9 below compares the major causes of death rate per 100,000 for residents of Sacramento County to the homeless deaths in 2021.

Table 9: Sacramento County v Homeless Causes of Death Rate per 100,000: 2021

Cause of death	Sacramento County		Sacramento Homeless		Rate Ratio
	Number	Rate per 100,000	Number	Rate per 100,000	
Total deaths	13,805	870.4	199	2,144.9	2.5
Hypothermia	8	.4	8	86.2	215.5
AOD	612	38.6	98	1,056.3	27.4
Homicide	111	7	8	97	13.9
Accidental	511	32.2	41	441.9	13.7
Suicide	170	10.7	4	43.1	4

Figures 18 – 23 represents Table 9 graphically

Figure 18: Hypothermia deaths: Sacramento County v Homeless per 100,000: 2021

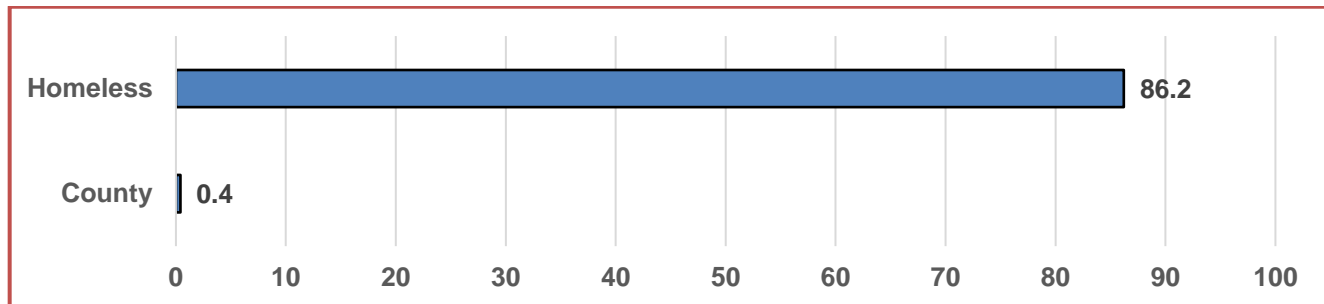


Figure 19: AOD deaths: Sacramento County v Homeless per 100,000: 2021

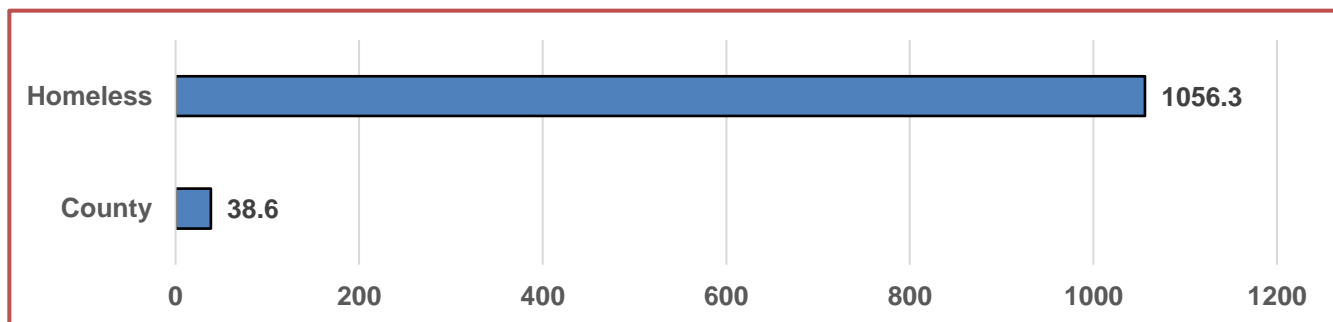


Figure 20: Homicide deaths: Sacramento County v Homeless per 100,000: 2021

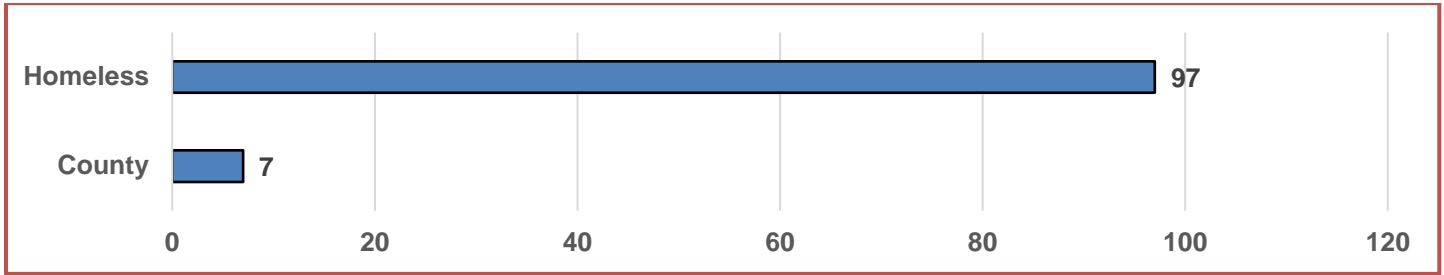


Figure 21: Accidental deaths: Sacramento County v Homeless per 100,000: 2021

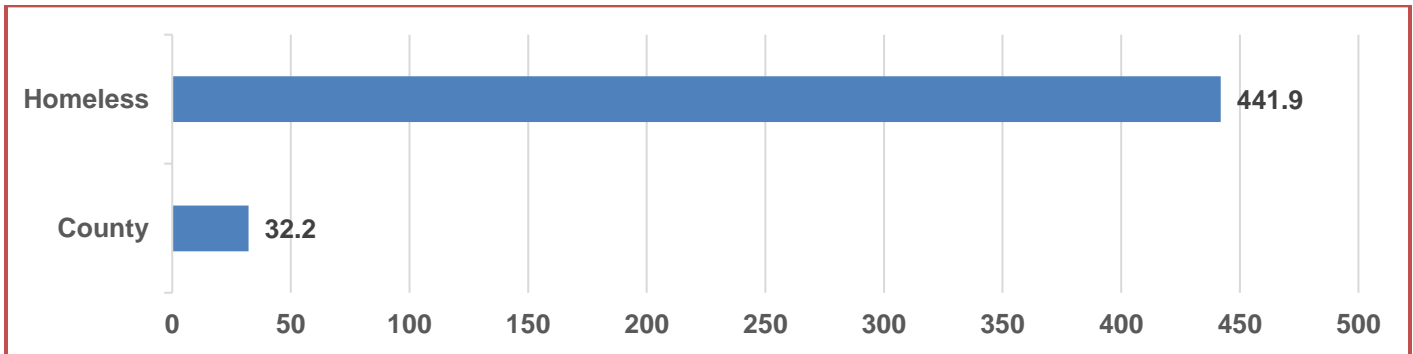


Figure 22: Suicide deaths: Sacramento County v Homeless per 100,000: 2021

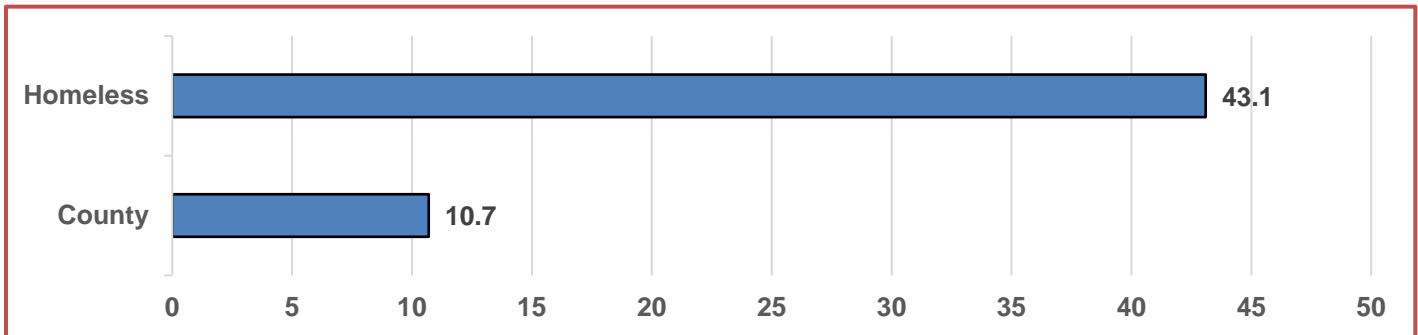
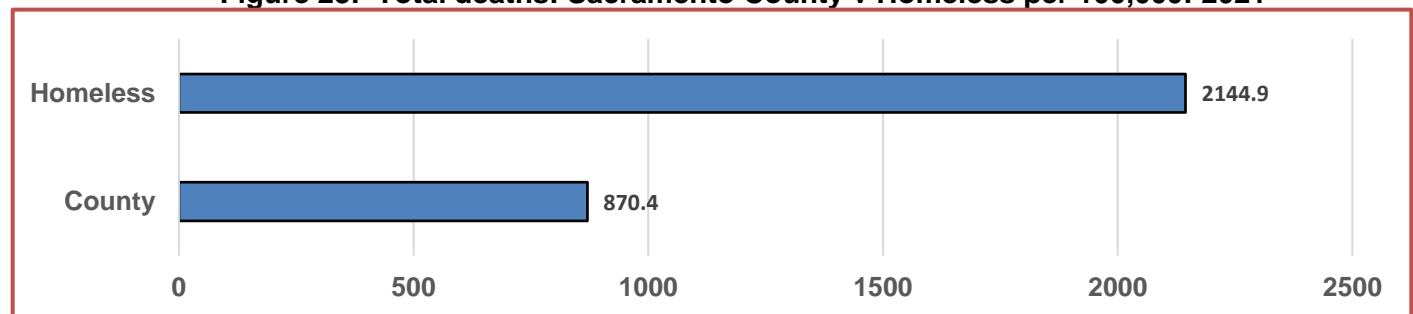


Figure 23: Total deaths: Sacramento County v Homeless per 100,000: 2021



Key Points:

- Overall, the homeless death rate in 2021 was 2.5 times higher than the county death rate [per 100,000]
- Hypothermia: the homeless death rate in 2021 from hypothermia was 215.5 times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from hypothermia
- Alcohol and Other Drugs [AOD]: the homeless death rate in 2021 from AOD was 37.4times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from AOD
- Homicide: the homeless death rate in 2021 from homicides was 13.9 times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from homicides
- Accidents: the homeless death rate in 2021 from accidents was 13.7 times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from accidents
- Suicides: the homeless death rate in 2021 from suicides was 4 times higher than the county death rate in 2021 from suicides

**Select Demographics: Gender; Age; Ethnicity
County v Homeless**

Figures 24 – 20 compares homeless deaths to overall county deaths in 2021 in select demographics [gender, age and ethnicity]

Figure 24: Deaths by Gender: Homeless vs County Overall: 2021

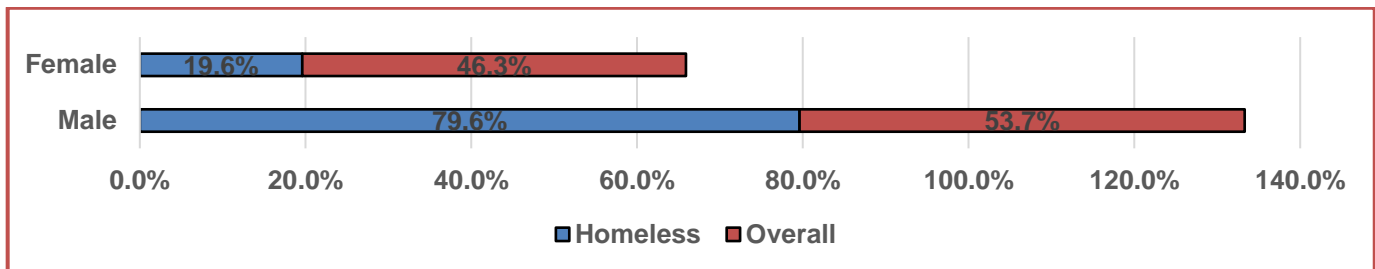


Figure 25: Deaths by Age Group: Homeless vs County Overall: 2021

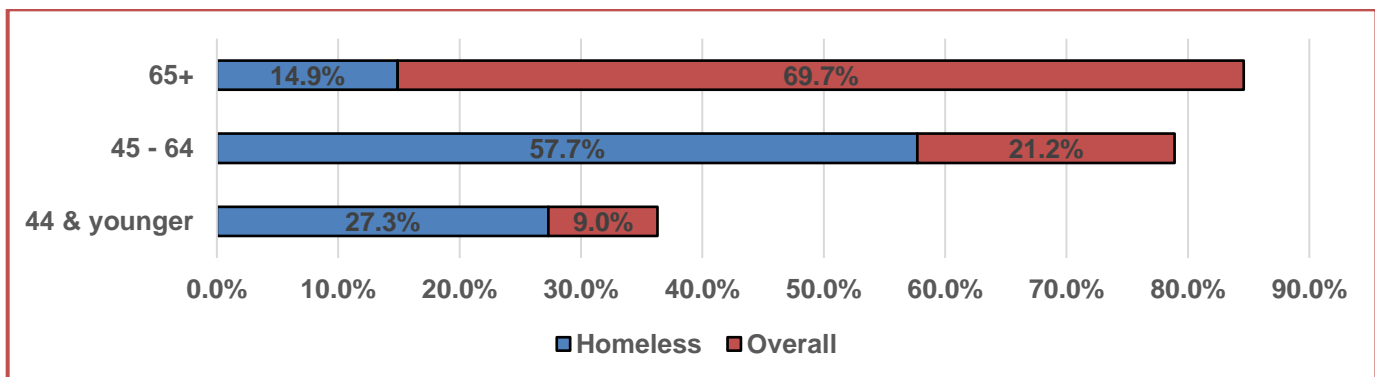
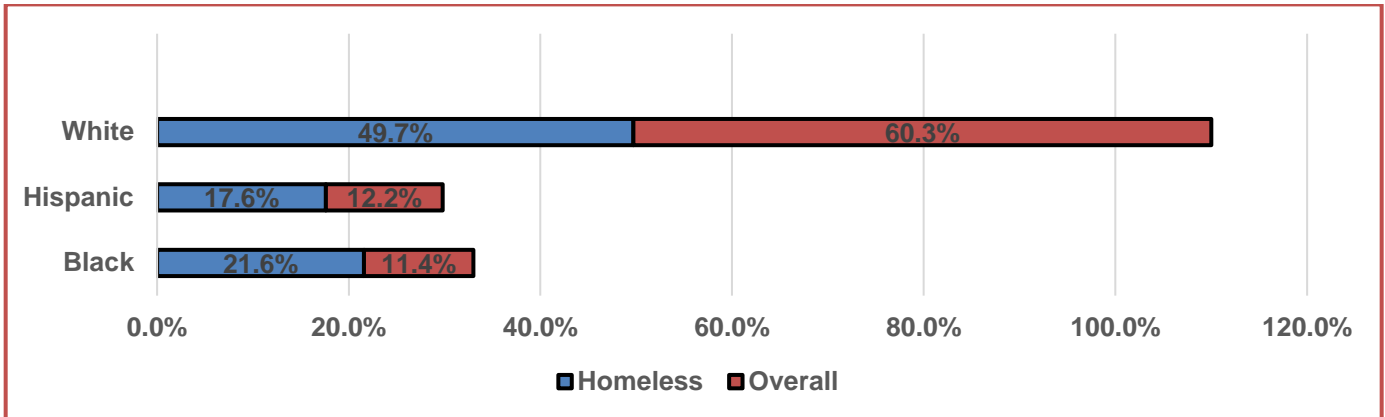


Figure 26: Deaths by Select Ethnicity: Homeless vs County Overall: 2021



Key Points:

- Compared to County overall deaths in 2021, deaths among people experiencing homelessness were more likely to be premature [under age 65]; male and Black or Hispanic
- Age:
 - ✓ homeless deaths at 44 or younger is 3 times higher compared to the County overall
 - ✓ homeless deaths at 45 – 64 is 2.7 times higher compared to the County overall
 - ✓ County overall deaths of 65+ is 4.7 times higher compared to homeless deaths
- Ethnicity:
 - ✓ Black homeless deaths is 1.89 times higher compared to Black deaths overall
 - ✓ Hispanic homeless deaths is 1.4 times higher compared to Hispanic deaths overall
 - ✓ County white deaths is 1.2 times higher compared to White homeless deaths

IV. Policy Recommendations

The Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness [SRCEH] is making the following policy recommendations, based on our analysis of the data in this report.



I. Sacramento City and County create a Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness:

Despite showing early promise, the City's 2021 *Comprehensive Siting Plan to Address Homelessness* was a failure for several reasons:

- Lack of participation by all City Councilmembers. Councilmembers Valenzuela, Vang and Schenirer were very engaged in siting homeless shelters and Safe Grounds in their district, but the other five were not.
- Lack of City/County Partnership agreement: despite months of promises that the City and County were on the verge of a partnership agreement, it did not materialize, and the City was forced to use needed funding to contract out for mental health and substance use disorder services.
- Not-In-My-Backyard [NIMBYism]: The few projects that were able to be sited [for example Broadway/X shelter and Miller Park Safe Ground] had to battle intense community NIMBYism which delayed the siting of these projects for many months.
- Failure by the City to implement or incorporate the recommendations of the *Community Comprehensive Siting Plan*, created by 16 community-based organizations and presented to the City Council in May, 2021, two months in advance of their vote in August 2021 on the City's Comprehensive Plan. The City's plan did not include a several key community recommendations that the community felt needed to be present to be successful, including:
 - ✓ Community Implementation Oversight Committee comprised of diverse stakeholders which would advise the City on key questions including, but not limited to, the nature of the services to be provided; who is providing those services; the timeline to develop various sites and turn them into successful facilities and how to successfully engage the encampments spread out across our community? How will these programs be staffed, including staff with specialized expertise in trauma informed care; AOD and behavioral health issues to name a few;
 - ✓ City immediately must implement a parallel planning process to create the income-based [affordable] housing to place our unhoused neighbors in the next 3 – 5 years so that the Safe Ground and Safe Parking programs do not become semi-permanent.

RECOMMENDATION

City, County, surrounding cities along with a diverse det of stakeholders in the community [people with lived experience, service providers, advocates, business organizations and neighborhood organizations] create a comprehensive regional plan to end and prevent homelessness which includes creating a Community Implementation Oversight Committee to hold the cities and county accountable



II. Affordable Housing:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *The City and County, in order to address the community's homeless crisis, declare in early 2023 in Sacramento City & County, Housing is a Human Right*
- *Immediately implement the \$100 M Affordable Housing Trust Fund, approved by the Sacramento City Council in January 2020 to create affordable housing for those residents of our community that are between 30% - 50% of Area Median Income [AMI]*



III. Address Systemic Racism and advance racial equity in solutions to end and prevent homelessness

RECOMMENDATION

The City and County implement the recommendations of Sacramento Steps Forward's Racial Equity Committee in Action Plan: Findings and Recommendations from the CoC Racial Equity Committee, Summer 2021

IV. Open 24/7 Respite Centers



RECOMMENDATION

The City and County open year-round respite centers [cooling center, warming centers and clean air centers] regardless of temperature "triggers"

The newly approved City's 24/7 Outreach and Engagement Center will serve up to 50 people experiencing homelessness and can serve as a model to replicate

V. **The County significantly Increases funding for alcohol, other drugs [AOD] and mental health treatment services and programs:**



RECOMMENDATIONS

- *The County Board of Supervisors support the recommendations of the County's Meth Coalition – Expand funding for alcohol and drug treatment as well as for mental health programs*
- *Additionally, the County Board of Supervisors refunds VOA's Substance Abuse Outreach & Treatment Program which provided free outpatient drug treatment services on demand*
- *County expand funding for harm reduction outreach teams*
- *All departments, including First Responders, in the City & County that do outreach and engagement to people experiencing homelessness adopt and implement a Trauma – Informed Approach to their outreach and engagement activities*

VI. **City & County end the continued criminalization of our unhoused neighbors:**



RECOMMENDATION

The City & County stop their continued criminalization of our unhoused neighbors through the passage of punitive ordinances in an effort to circumvent the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in Martin v Boise that states a jurisdictions effort to criminalize people experiencing homelessness if there is not enough shelter and housing violates the 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as “cruel and unusual punishment”

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY & CREDITS

Coroner's Office:

This report is based on the report of deaths of people experiencing homelessness, January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021, as reported by the Sacramento County Coroner's office.

The data in the Coroner's report included: Name; Date of death; Age; Ethnicity; Location; Causes[s] of death [A,B,C,D]; and Manner of death.

Death Investigation is pursuant to the California Government Code Section 27491 for all deaths meeting the jurisdictional requirements (of Ca Gov. Code Sec 27491) occurring within Sacramento County. Death investigation included the following: Death Scene Investigation (when possible); Forensic Examination of remains (autopsy, external examination and or medical record review); Forensic Toxicology analysis when warranted/possible; Decedent Identification Confirmation; Follow-up investigation/Interviews with all relevant investigative parties/stakeholders (law enforcement, EMS, hospitals, reporting party, service providers, families, friends, coworkers, etc.); Decedent Record review (medical records, criminal records, work history records, military records, local/state/federal personal information database records all inclusive)

As part of the overall investigation the Coroner's office determines the decedent's address. The components included in this determination include the reporting party's information, death scene investigation, interviews of friends and family and witnesses, evidence found at autopsy that may confirm a homeless lifestyle and record checks.

This report is not a report of every homeless person's death in 2021, however we feel confident that the report captures most of the deaths of people experiencing homelessness and gives us a large enough database to be able to identify issues and comparisons to SRCEH findings in our previous two homeless deaths reports and make recommendations for the future on how to lower the number of preventable deaths of homeless people.

Methodology for data analysis:

The database was provided by Sacramento County Coroner's Office.

Mortality rates per 100,000 for the County v Homeless provided by Sacramento County Public Health Epidemiology Unit

Report reviewed by Dr. M.K. Orsulak, MD, MPH

Data analysis was performed by Bob Erlenbusch, Executive Director, SRCEH.

Report and recommendations:

The report was written by Bob Erlenbusch, Executive Director, Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness [SRCEH].

Recommendations were made by the SRCEH Board of Directors.

Photo Credit: The cover photo of the "Day of the Dead" Altar, Loaves & Fishes, 2013 was taken by Paula Lomazzi, Executive Director, Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee [SHOC]

Map credit: Juan Govea

Infographic Credit: Infographic provided by Kai Erlenbusch.

CONTACT INFORMATION

**Bob Erlenbusch Executive Director
1026 Florin Road, #349
Sacramento, CA 95831**

M: 916-889-4367

bob@srceh.org

www.srceh.org

