

NEWS

Homelessness in Long Beach rose 6.5% over the last year, new data shows



by [John Donegan](#)
12 hours ago



Long Beach Mayor Rex Richardson leads a team of city officials as they present the findings of the 2025 homeless point-in-time count in Long Beach on Monday, June 2, 2025. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

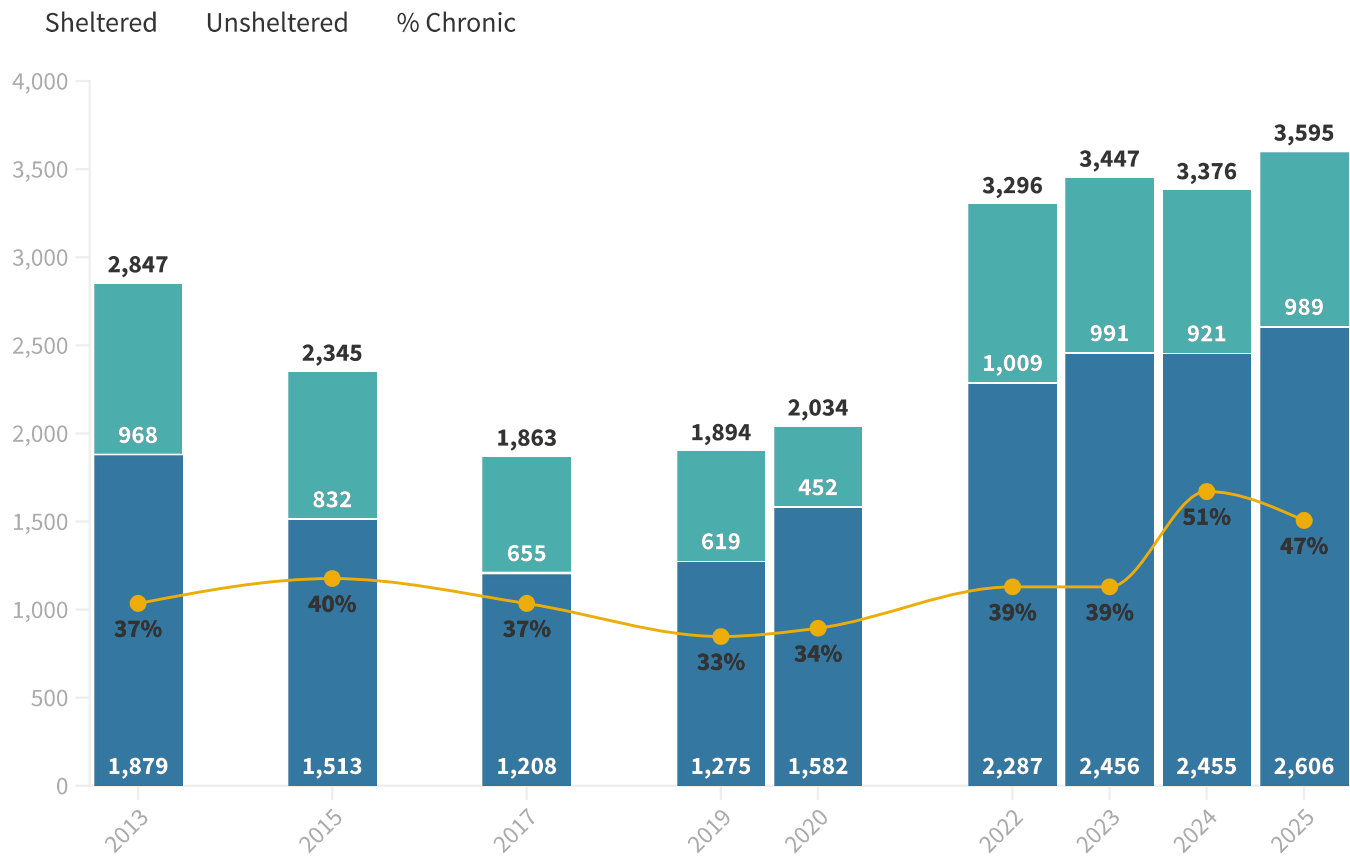
The number of people in Long Beach living in cars, tents or shelters rose by 6.5% over the last year, spurred by high rents, fraying mental health and displacement from the fires that raged across Los Angeles in January.

According to data revealed today from the city’s annual tally, there were 3,595 people experiencing homelessness locally — 219 more than last year and the highest number in more than a decade.

It’s a marked reversal for a city that only a year ago declared it had “turned the tide” on homelessness and was now driving it down.

Sheltered and unsheltered homeless in Long Beach

2013 - 2025



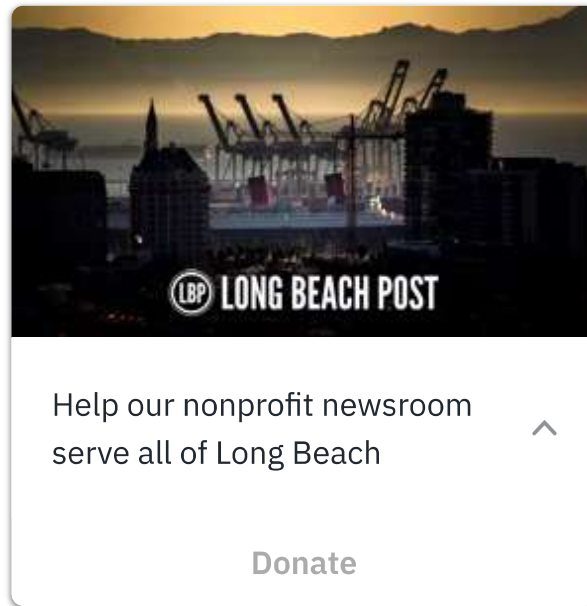
Source: City of Long Beach
Last updated 06/2/25

A report on the data collected this year showed nearly every category of unhoused people grew or stayed stubbornly high, with the rise especially significant among those in age ranges 25 to 34 (16.8% increase) and 35 to 44 (36.9%). The number of people in shelters rose by 7.4%, while unsheltered homeless rose 6%.

Officials attributed this year’s increase mostly to people being displaced by the wildfires in Altadena and Pacific Palisades. Volunteers spread out for the point-in-time count on Jan. 23, as the fires were still burning.

The surveyors, who collect data annually on those who live outside, in homeless shelters or other makeshift lodging, asked an extra question this year about whether people were homeless as a result of the wildfires.

Officials say 167 people — 76% of the increase — said they were. Even if those people were subtracted from Long Beach’s tally, homelessness would still be up about 1.5%, officials said.



During the count, volunteers found that more than a third of people experiencing homelessness sleep in their cars, while others stay in encampments and tents under bridges — places where the risks of violence and illness are especially high.

One third of respondents said they either suffered from a physical disability, mental illness or chronic medical condition, with another quarter saying they struggled with an addiction.

Many of the city’s homeless are local, with 56.8% saying they previously lived in a Long Beach home, with another 26.7% saying they had been staying somewhere in Los Angeles County.

Concentrations of homeless people were highest in Downtown Long Beach, around the city’s Multi-Service Center, near the 710 and 91 freeways and along the Los Angeles Riverbed.

The report also cited other reasons for the recent rise, including the end of pandemic-era measures to protect the needy, but city officials emphasized that the biggest problem lies in prevention; more people enter homelessness than those who exit.



Kelsey Mader and Jeremy Ancalade gather information from a homeless man during the annual point-in-time homeless count in Long Beach on Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

Statistically, if the tide of people losing their homes was stopped today, Long Beach would end homelessness within two years, said Dalton Dorr, a city data analyst.

“Although you do the work of pulling people out of homelessness, we have to place, as a region, just as large of a focus on prevention, and keeping folks from slipping into homelessness,” Long Beach Mayor Rex Richardson said.

According to the city report, which was presented at a roundtable of city officials on Monday, more than half of the survey respondents said this was their first episode of homelessness.

The city notched successes in some categories: homelessness among older adults declined, with a 32.8% drop among those 65 or older; the number of houseless veterans also dropped more than 11%.

The city also said it moved all but nine of the 90 people who stayed temporarily at the Vagabond Inn Downtown into permanent or temporary housing. The Inn **closed its doors** to the homeless last week

following a one-year program to house people primarily living around Lincoln Park and the Billie Jean King Library.

Nearly half of the city's homeless population said their situation is the result of losing their job or not being able to afford rent in a region that costs 48.8% more than the national average, according to the Council for Community and Economic Research Cost of Living Index.

City data shows its shelter space is typically at 93% occupancy — over 90% capacity since 2022 — while 99% of its emergency housing vouchers are used.

Citywide, it took an average of 251 days for someone in 2024 to be placed in permanent housing — triple the time it took in 2020. But the time it takes for people in interim housing to find a permanent place to live has decreased steadily since 2022, from 246 days to 136 days in 2024.

Though officials acknowledged housing costs play a major role, Richardson downplayed the idea of any sweeping legislation, like rent control, and said they're focusing instead on housing production.



Mayor Rex Richardson and Loren Simpson talk to and gather information from a homeless man during the annual point-in-time homeless count in Long Beach on Thursday, January 23, 2025. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

“When there’s something that changes the rental market, let’s say a giant stadium comes in like SoFi (Stadium), and completely changes the ability for a market rate rent to be affordable, that’s when you look at rent stabilization,” he said.

More trouble is also looming.

According to Long Beach Health and Human Services Director Alison King, the city expects to lose more than 500 federally funded emergency housing vouchers by the end of this year.

Originally a 10-year commitment through 2031, King explained that after Dec. 31, any room vacated will be lost for future use, preventing any of the more than 500 people on the housing waitlist from being given a home.

“We may be able to extend some for a period, but we have not been promised additional funding, and that could put those persons at risk,” King said.

Federal cuts may also axe the city’s \$300,000 planning grant funding for programs like the yearly point-in-time count. Officials said if that were to happen, they would have to find the money elsewhere.