

DEATHS AMONG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

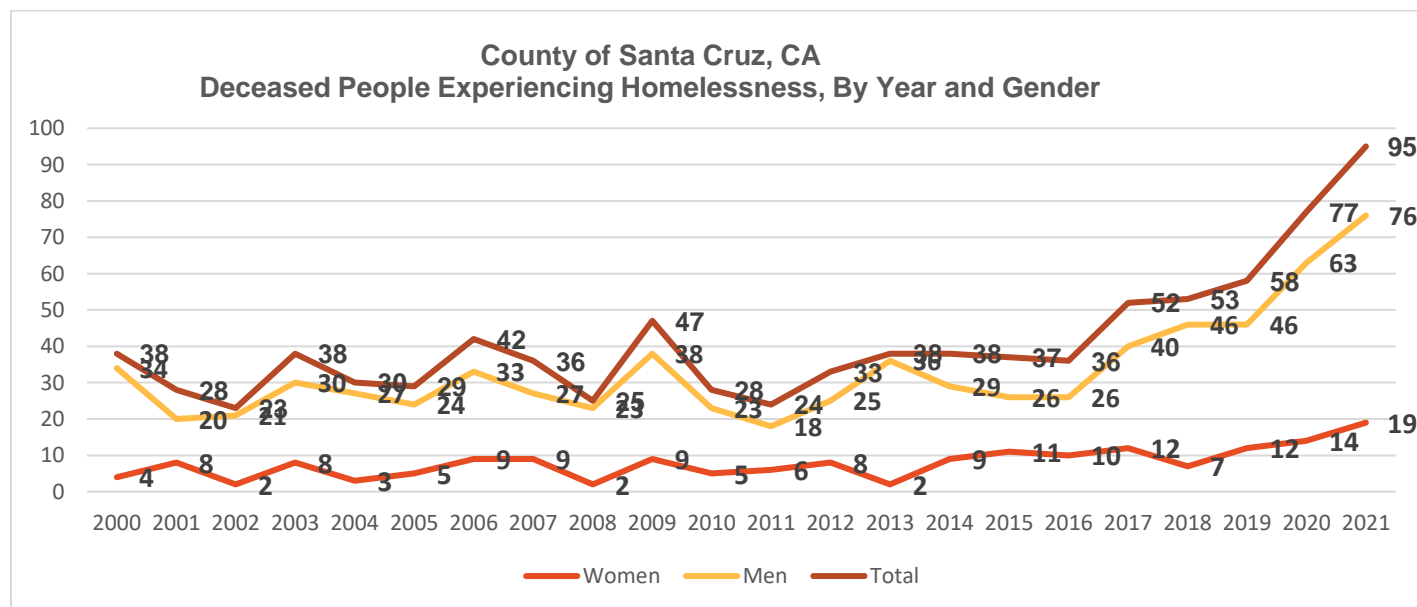
DECEMBER 8, 2020 – DECEMBER 5, 2021

	Housed	Homeless	
Santa Cruz Population	269,925	2,032	
Deaths in 2020	1,954	95	
% of Total	0.72%	4.7%	
	1 in every 139	1 in every 21	People Experiencing Homelessness died at 6.6x the rate of the housed population

People Experiencing Homelessness died at ~6.6x the rate of the rest of the county population in 2021.

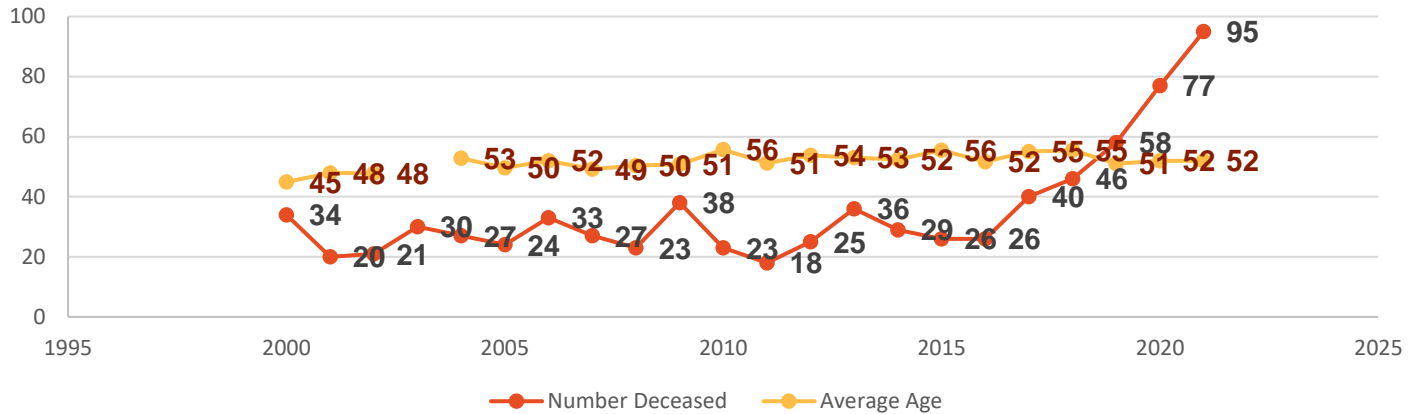
	Housed	Homeless	
Santa Cruz Deaths	1,954	95	
Deaths of men 40 and under	59	13	
Deaths of women 40 and under	30	6	
Total	89	19	
	4.6% of population	20% of population	People Experiencing Homelessness and were 40 and under when they died, did so at 4.3x the rate of the housed population

People Experiencing Homelessness who were 40 years old and under died at 4.3x the rate of those who were housed.



It has been five years since the number of homeless deaths decreased from the previous year. For each of the past three years, the number of homeless deaths have been the highest number recorded in our county since tracking this data began in 2000.

County of Santa Cruz, CA - Deceased People Experiencing Homelessness, By Year and Average Age



The average age in 2003 is not available. This shows as a gap in the above chart. While the average age of deceased persons remained steady for the past ten years, the number of homeless deaths has been increasing.

Healthcare Appointments at County Clinics

Deaths By Year and Age Group; Average Number of Clinic Appointments Per Person since 2005

2021

Age	# of People	Average # of Appts	Adjusted Average	People with Zero Appts
40 and under	19	10	8	8
41-50	19	21	12	7
51-60	30	19	16	6
60+	27	46	39	4
Total	95			25

2020

Age	# of People	Average # of Appts	Adjusted Average	People with Zero Appts
40 and under	15	4	3	7
41-50	15	24	12	1
51-60	25	16	13	4
60+	22	34	28	3
Total	77			15

2019

Age	# of People	Average # of Appts	Adjusted Average	People with Zero Appts
40 and under	13	8	4	3
41-50	10	38	22	0
51-60	13	38	29	3
60+	22	27	23	3
Total	58			9

Adjusted Average removes the highest number of visits per Age group; from 25% to 200% more than the next highest amount.

The younger someone is, the less likely they are to go to the doctor for preventive checkups or general illnesses. Many people wait until it is too late to address pre-cursors to conditions such as hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, and COPD (chronic pulmonary disease) to name a few. Simple wounds can lead to infections, abscesses, and sepsis if not addressed at the outset.

Many life threatening conditions can be stabilized through medications, rest or exercise, and other mitigating factors. Experiencing homelessness and having one or more of these conditions and diseases can be overwhelming and very difficult to deal with.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Number of Deaths for People Experiencing Homelessness: 95

By Gender:

Male: 76
Female: 19

By Age:

Under 21: 1	41-50: 19	over 70: 5
21-30: 4	51-60: 30	
31-40: 14	61-70: 22	

Lifespan:

	Housed	Homeless
Average Lifespan	75.94	52.08
Men	72.62	53.33
Women	79.33	47.11

Race:

White: 61
Hispanic/Latino: 26
Native American: 2
Black: 4
Asian: 2

Location at time of Death:

Outside: 26	Santa Cruz: 57
Hospital/Skilled Nursing Facility: 35	Watsonville: 9
Data Not Yet Available: 8	Scotts Valley: 2
Shelter: 10	Out of County: 6
Friend/Family Residence: 11	Data Not Yet Available: 21
In Vehicle: 5	

Primary Factor Leading to Death

Cardiac Disease/Heart Failure: 13	Respiratory Failure: 3
COVID-19: 3	Hypothermia: 1
Cancer: 4	Sepsis: 2
Undetermined/Pending: 8	
Killed: 1	
Accident: 4	
Overdose: 22	
MRSA: 3	
Other: 31	

How the data is collected:

Throughout the year, HPHP staff maintain a log of deaths that occur among people experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County. The log includes information on confirmed deaths of HPHP clients, as well as confirmed reports of deaths received from other county clinics, homeless service organizations, medical providers, the County Office of Vital Statistics, the County Public Administrator's office and friends or family members of those who have died.

The data available from this process most likely under-represents the number of deaths in the county. Housing status at the time of death is neither well documented nor easily determined. Housing status in general, is a social determinant of health that our health care system can improve upon in identifying to initiate interventions to address homelessness during health care visits. Information on likely factors leading to death is imprecise, and the cause can be unknown at the time of death. For the sake of summarizing the information, we have assigned a single primary contributing factor to each death, but in many cases, there are multiple, significant factors that have contributed to an individual's death.

For this reason, the data provided in this summary should not be interpreted as a definitive accounting of deaths among the homeless population in our county. Instead, this reflects our best effort at this time to collect and analyze accurate data on homeless deaths in a way that is meaningful to our community, to homeless service providers, and to the friends and family of those who have died.

About the Memorial:

Our purpose in preparing and distributing this report at this time of year is three-fold. First, we wish to honor and mark the passing of all those who died while homeless in our community during the last year. Second, we strive to document and increase awareness of the serious and negative impact of homelessness on the lives of our fellow community members. Finally, we reflect upon and re-commit ourselves to the work that is left to be done in our county to prevent so many unnecessary and unjustly early deaths each year.

Our memorial service includes a reading of the names of the 95 people who were experiencing homelessness at their death and are reflected in our annual report. We will also read the names of an additional 55 individuals who were previously homeless and died this year, along with one person who had moved out of county, but had experienced homelessness in Santa Cruz for many years. Many of these individuals were homeless for long periods of time during their lives. We invite people to add names to our list of anyone we may have overlooked.

Nearly all the people who died this year were known personally to one of us at HPHP, Housing Matters, or to one of our colleagues at homeless service organizations in Watsonville and elsewhere in the county. We are often shocked and always saddened by their deaths. We will miss each person who has died. We hope this information and this memorial event will serve to honor the life of each person, to guide us in our ongoing efforts to improve the health and quality of life for all who experience homelessness, and to recommit ourselves as a community to ending homelessness in Santa Cruz County.