Learning about Homelessness in the U.S. Using Linked Administrative and Survey Data
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Disclaimer

- Any opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Census Bureau. All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization numbers CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-004 and CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.
Background

- Part of Comprehensive Income Dataset (CID) project which combines survey and admin data to improve income estimates and related statistics
- Official poverty statistics and extreme poverty studies are not intended to represent people experiencing homelessness
- People experiencing homelessness not covered or sharply under-represented in most surveys
  - Not generally surveyed in CPS and SIPP; ACS includes only those in shelters
- We use restricted survey and administrative data to:
  - improve income estimates
  - understand survey coverage
  - learn about homeless population

What we can learn about homeless population

- Population Estimates and Survey Coverage
  - Population estimates and their differences across data sources
  - Coverage in available data sources
- Population Characteristics
  - Characteristics including, age, gender, race, education, disabilities, veteran status, and migration
- Income and Program Receipt
  - Employment and earnings in formal labor market
  - Safety net program receipt
  - Permanence or transience of low material well-being among homeless people
  - Implications for official statistics of the omission of homeless people
Challenges to studying homelessness

- People experiencing homelessness are difficult to survey
  - Reasons include mobility, lack of a permanent residence, tenuous attachment to living quarters, not wanting to be found, pretending to be housed (Glasser, Hirsch, and Chan 2014) or cognitive challenges
  - Raises questions about the representativeness and comprehensiveness of any data source

- There are many different definitions of homelessness
  - We focus on individuals residing in emergency or transitional shelters ("sheltered homeless") and those whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not meant for human habitation ("unsheltered homeless")
  - Literature is also concerned with precariously housed and "doubled up": more complicated to do with current data, for future work (Lee, Tyler, and Wright 2010)

Public sources of counts or estimates

- HUD issues an Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress
  - Provides nationwide estimates of homelessness, including service-use patterns, the capacity to house homeless persons, and some information about the characteristics of people experiencing homelessness (although limited relative to the ACS)

- 2010 Census Special Report on the Emergency and Transitional Shelter Population described the geographic distribution of the sheltered population and provided demographic characteristics (Smith, Holmberg, and Jones-Puthoff 2010)
Other sources of counts or estimates

- Besides AHARs and Census report, the best detailed national study on homelessness is more than two decades old
  - The 1996 National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients (NSHAPC) provided detailed demographic and economic characteristics (Burt et al. 1999)
- Localized studies offer a wealth of information but may not be generalizable
  - Some local homeless services administrative units (Continuums of Care, or CoCs) publish their own reports analyzing shelter use databases
  - Some research using administrative databases in a handful of major cities (Culhane 1994, Culhane et al. 2007, Metraux et al. 2018)

Bringing new data and methods to bear

- Our approach takes advantage of large samples that offer a guide to national homeless patterns, including the unsheltered
  - To date, very few studies on homelessness use the Decennial Census and ACS
- We rely on accurate administrative data as well as self-reports
- By linking tax and program data, we get a more detailed picture of situation of those experiencing homelessness including longitudinal information
Population Estimates and Survey Coverage

Census Bureau Data

- 2010 Decennial Census
  - Enumerated individuals at emergency and transitional shelters, as well as unsheltered individuals in soup kitchens, regularly-scheduled mobile food vans, and targeted non-sheltered outdoor locations (TNSOLs)
  - Enumeration frame developed by internet research and querying local officials, followed by validation and advance visits

- American Community Survey
  - Collects micro-level data on individuals in emergency and transitional shelters since 2006
  - Draws on the shelter list from the Decennial, which was expanded starting in 2011
HUD Local/Administrative Data

- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
  - Aggregated Data
    - HMIS data, maintained by CoCs, provides unduplicated data for individuals experiencing homelessness over a period of time and is extrapolated to form national estimates
  - HMIS Micro-Data
    - The CID project has access to linked HMIS data from Los Angeles and Houston, including dates of shelter entry and exit
- HUD Point-in-Time Count (PIT)
  - CoCs conduct annual counts of sheltered and unsheltered homeless on one evening in January
  - PIT counts of the shelter homeless include domestic violence shelters

Administrative Income/Resource Data

- We link these sources to the following longitudinal administrative data:
  - Taxable Income (IRS 1040s, W2s, 1099-Rs)
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for five states for full time period
    - Illinois, Indiana, New York, New Jersey, and Tennessee
  - Medicare and Medicaid enrollment, VA benefits
  - Housing assistance (HUD PIC and TRACS)
  - Birth and death dates (Numident)
Overall Population Estimates: Sheltered

*Indicates data obtained from publicly available sources.
All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-004.

Overall Population Estimates: Unsheltered

*Indicates data obtained from publicly available sources.
All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-004.
Why Sources Differ: Time Frame

- Person-weighted characteristics weight equally anyone who experienced a shelter stay in a given year
  - Approximated by characteristics from period-prevalent data source, like HMIS
- Day-weighted characteristics are weighted by the number of days an individual spent in a shelter in a given year
  - Approximated by characteristics from a point in time data source, like Decennial, ACS, or PIT
- Some differences – e.g. share under 18, share female in Houston – but fairly similar

| HMIS Sheltered Homeless Characteristics Under Different Weighting Schemes |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Person-Weighted                   | Day-Weighted     | Person-Weighted  | Day-Weighted     |
| White                             | 43%              | 42%              | 35%              | 34%              |
| Black                             | 47%              | 48%              | 60%              | 63%              |
| Under 18                          | 13%              | 13%              | 21%              | 26%              |
| Female                            | 34%              | 36%              | 40%              | 49%              |
| Hispanic                          | 29%              | 30%              | 12%              | 11%              |

Sources: 2004-2014 LA CoC HMIS Data, 2004-2015 Houston CoC HMIS Data

Note: The Los Angeles CoC includes Los Angeles county excluding Pasadena, Long Beach, and Glendale. The Houston CoC encompasses Houston, Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties. We restrict the HMIS data to emergency and transitional shelters, and we drop HMIS observations with no entry date, no exit date, or neither. When the entry date equals the exit date we count these as one-day spells. All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-004.

Why Sources Differ: Seasonality

Average Daily Shelter Occupancy by City and Month

Sources: 2009-2015 Houston CoC HMIS Data, 2009-2014 LA CoC HMIS Data

Note: Houston CoC encompasses Houston, Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties. The Los Angeles CoC encompasses shelters in Los Angeles County excluding Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena. Figure displays occupancy in emergency and transitional shelters only. Average daily shelter occupancy is computed by summing up the person-days of shelter stays in a given city and month over the multi-year period, and then dividing by the number of days belonging to that month over the multi-year period.

All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-004.
Why Sources Differ: Coverage

Sheltered Homeless Estimates by Data Source

- Completeness of data sources appears to vary geographically
- Planned but not implemented: link the Decennial Census to HMIS micro-data to estimate coverage of Decennial Census homeless in HMIS and vice versa

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Population Characteristics
Sheltered Homeless Characteristics

### Race

- **HMIS***

- **Decennial**

- **ACS**


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Sheltered Homeless Characteristics

- **Share Hispanic and male across data sources**
  - About 17% Hispanic
  - About 62% male

- **Sheltered homeless by age in HMIS data**
  - Share under 18 is 22% in HMIS, 20% in Decennial, 15% in ACS
  - Modal age category in all sources is 31-50 years (about 36% of sheltered homeless)
### Demographics relative to comparison groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Sheltered Homeless</th>
<th>Single Poor Non-Group Quarters</th>
<th>Non-Group Quarters</th>
<th>NSHAPC (1996)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Ages 17+)</td>
<td>Share (%)</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Share (%)</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>5.8 (0.87)</td>
<td>12.3 (0.22)</td>
<td>6.8 (0.05)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-17</td>
<td>9.6 (1.32)</td>
<td>25.9 (0.29)</td>
<td>17.9 (0.06)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>11.1 (1.02)</td>
<td>12.5 (0.25)</td>
<td>9.2 (0.05)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44</td>
<td>38.2 (1.63)</td>
<td>23.5 (0.28)</td>
<td>26.6 (0.08)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>39.9 (2.13)</td>
<td>17.1 (0.23)</td>
<td>26.6 (0.08)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;64</td>
<td>3.5 (0.72)</td>
<td>8.7 (0.15)</td>
<td>12.9 (0.05)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>62.1 (2.60)</td>
<td>41.1 (0.32)</td>
<td>48.8 (0.08)</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>47.0 (2.54)</td>
<td>56.3 (0.36)</td>
<td>75.5 (0.09)</td>
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<td>Black</td>
<td>40.6 (2.03)</td>
<td>30.7 (0.31)</td>
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<td>AI/AN</td>
<td>2.7 (0.52)</td>
<td>2.2 (0.09)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.8 (0.49)</td>
<td>2.3 (0.10)</td>
<td>5.1 (0.04)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.9 (1.13)</td>
<td>8.5 (0.22)</td>
<td>5.4 (0.05)</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic (%)</td>
<td>17.0 (1.42)</td>
<td>25.0 (0.30)</td>
<td>17.0 (0.07)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Sample Size</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>32,500</td>
<td>433,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pop. Estimate/Weighted Count</td>
<td>165,400</td>
<td>2,684,000</td>
<td>30,150,000</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** 2010 American Community Survey, Burt et al. 1999

**Note:** The ACS characteristics for GQ individuals are computed among non-imputed individuals using survey weights that are scaled up by a constant such that the new weighted count of non-imputed observations is equal to the old weighted sum of imputed and non-imputed records. * Indicates data from publicly available sources.

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### Mobility Since Birth and in Last Year

**Source:** 2010 American Community Survey

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Share Urban, Citizenship, and Education

- 95% of the sheltered homeless are located in urban areas
  - Compared to 82% of single poor adults and 76% of the non-GQ population
- 94% of the sheltered homeless are citizens
  - Compared to 92% of single poor adults and 93% of the non-GQ population
- Educational attainment for the sheltered homeless
  - 27% have less than HS, 37% have HS diploma/GED, and 30% more than HS
  - 5% are college grads

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Income and Program Receipt
## Linkage (PIK) Rates

### Unweighted Homeless PIK Rates Across Census Bureau Datasets

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<td>Shelter</td>
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<td>0.699</td>
<td>0.726</td>
<td>0.827</td>
<td>0.772</td>
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<td>0.790</td>
<td>0.779</td>
<td>0.750</td>
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<td>Decennial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>0.686</td>
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<td>Soup Kitchen</td>
<td>0.418</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Van</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNSOL</td>
<td>0.172</td>
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<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMIS¹</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>0.979</td>
<td>0.967</td>
<td>0.955</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>0.962</td>
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<tr>
<td>E.A.</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.895</td>
<td>0.939</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>0.870</td>
<td>0.861</td>
<td>0.879</td>
<td>0.906</td>
<td>0.922</td>
<td>0.923</td>
<td>0.925</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** 2006-2016 ACS, 2010 Decennial Census, 2004-2014 Los Angeles CoC HMIS Data, 2004-2014 Houston CoC HMIS Data

**Note:** Table reports the unweighted shares of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals who are PIKed in the 2006-2016 ACS and Decennial Census by GQ type. Due to a change in the ACS sampling methodology in 2011 that introduced imputed shelter homeless individuals, we report only the shares of non-imputed shelter homeless individuals who are PIKed from 2011-2016. All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-004.

¹The Houston CoC encompasses shelters in Houston, Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery Counties.

²The Los Angeles CoC encompasses shelters in Los Angeles excluding Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena.

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### Adjusting for Missing PIKs

- We adjust for individuals missing PIKs using inverse probability weighting (IPW)
- In the Decennial, our model adjusts individual-level weights for the homeless based on:
  - Age
  - Race
  - Gender
  - Hispanic origin
  - State
  - Enumeration type (shelter, soup kitchen, food van, TNSOL)
- Covariates are limited in Decennial relative to ACS; may still be some conditional non-randomness in PIKing (especially when PIK rates low)
  - We exclude TNSOLs from income and program receipt results due to this concern
Benefit Receipt

Share Receiving Any Benefits in Administrative Data
(Ages 18-64 in 2010)


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.

Pre-Tax Income

Share With Positive Pre-Tax Income in Administrative Data
(Ages 18-64 in 2010)


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.
Pre-Tax Income (75th Percentile)


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.

Pre-Tax Income & In-Kind Transfers (75th Percentile)


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.
All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.
VA Benefit Receipt

Share Receiving VA Benefits in Administrative Data (Ages 18-64 in 2010)

Year observed as homeless or poor


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization numbers CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.

SNAP Receipt

Share Enrolled in SNAP in Administrative Data (Ages 18-64 in 2010)

Year observed as homeless or poor


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.
HUD Benefit Receipt

Share Receiving Housing Benefits in Administrative Data (Ages 18-64 in 2010)


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.

Self-Reported Earnings & Benefit Receipt

Employment & Program Participation Among Adults Ages 18-64

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sheltered Homeless</th>
<th>Single Poor Non-GQ</th>
<th>Non-GQ Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in Past Year (%)</td>
<td>40.9 (2.09)</td>
<td>45.8 (0.45)</td>
<td>77.6 (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Wks Worked in Past 12 Mo. (Cond. On +)</td>
<td>28.4 (1.12)</td>
<td>33.1 (0.25)</td>
<td>44.9 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Hours Worked Per Week (Cond. On +)</td>
<td>32.9 (0.76)</td>
<td>30.2 (0.17)</td>
<td>38.7 (0.02)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefit Receipt Rates and Amounts Among Adults Ages 18-64

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sheltered Homeless</th>
<th>Single Poor Non-GQ</th>
<th>Non-GQ Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement or Pension Income Receipt Rate (%)</td>
<td>2.7 (0.78)</td>
<td>2.4 (0.11)</td>
<td>4.5 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid Receipt Rate (%)</td>
<td>46.7 (2.37)</td>
<td>39.1 (0.49)</td>
<td>10.4 (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamp Receipt Rate (%)</td>
<td>60.4 (1.85)</td>
<td>53.7 (0.46)</td>
<td>13.6 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI Receipt Rate (%)</td>
<td>8.8 (0.84)</td>
<td>10.8 (0.30)</td>
<td>2.7 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Assistance Receipt Rate (%)</td>
<td>19.2 (1.74)</td>
<td>8.5 (0.25)</td>
<td>1.8 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Any Transfer Income (%)</td>
<td>66.3 (1.64)</td>
<td>57.0 (0.47)</td>
<td>15.4 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Any Retirement or Employment Income (%)</td>
<td>45.2 (1.93)</td>
<td>47.6 (0.45)</td>
<td>79.7 (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income Receipt (%)</td>
<td>11.9 (1.17)</td>
<td>12.9 (0.30)</td>
<td>8.6 (0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Total Income Amount ($) (Cond. On +)</td>
<td>9,474.0 (470.0)</td>
<td>7,526.0 (55.7)</td>
<td>40,400.0 (129.30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.
Share with Earnings or Benefits by Sub-Group

Share with Positive Earnings, 2010 (Ages 18-64)

Share with Benefit Receipt, 2010 (Ages 18-64)


Overall Impressions of Results

- Moderate rates of geographic mobility
- High rates of cognitive and moderate rates of physical limitations
- Administrative data indicates that the homeless are among the most materially deprived Americans
- Lack of employment and reliance on safety net persistent
- Homeless almost all reached by some safety net program

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Comparison to Previous Literature

Where we agree with previous literature

- **Black**
  - We find 40.6% of sheltered homeless are black, compared to 30.7% of the poor comparison group and 12.8% of the general population

- **Male**
  - 62.1% in the 2010 ACS

- **Veterans**
  - 14.2% of sheltered homeless were veterans in the 2010 ACS, compared to 3.64% of the poor comparison group and 12.8% of the general population

- **Hispanics**
  - 17% Hispanic, compared to 25% for the poor

Where we disagree

- Administrative data v. SNAP receipt self-reported in survey
  - 80% of sheltered homeless received SNAP, as opposed to 60% in ACS

- Employment among shelter homeless compared to what previously thought
  - Administrative data indicates 55% for sheltered homeless, as opposed to 40-45% in previous literature

Where we bring new evidence

- Sheltered homeless v. unsheltered in enrollment in safety net programs and income
- Female and African-American incomes
Implications for Poverty Statistics

- The homeless population is very small relative to the broader population in poverty
  - Including the ACS sheltered homeless in official statistics would increase the poverty rate by between 0.05 and 0.10 percentage points on a base of about 15 percent (15.1 in the 2010 CPS)
  - If we assume all those in the PIT count were poor (sheltered and unsheltered), we would add to poverty between 0.15 and 0.20 percentage points
- Effect on poverty statistics in certain geographic areas or for certain sub-groups (e.g. veterans, people with disabilities) may be more pronounced - a topic we will explore in future work
- Important to look at homeless population separately to understand the deprivation they face

Future Research

- Transitions in and out of Homelessness
  - Length of homelessness and dynamics of housing status for the population
  - Demographic and economic factors associated with entry to and exit from homelessness
- Migration and Geographic Dispersion
  - Determinants of the geographic distribution of homelessness
  - Degree of mobility of people experiencing homelessness
- Mortality
  - Mortality differences between the sheltered homeless, unsheltered homeless, and non-homeless
Work Cited


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Appendix

# Data Sources on Homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010 Decennial</th>
<th>ACS</th>
<th>HMIS National Estimates</th>
<th>HMIS Micro-Data</th>
<th>HUD PIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusion of Unsheltered</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Availability</strong></td>
<td>Aggregate data is available in Census Special Report.</td>
<td>Publicly available data do not identify the homeless.</td>
<td>Aggregate data is in HUD's AHAR report to Congress.</td>
<td>Some CoCs publish local reports. Micro-data restricted.</td>
<td>Aggregate data is in HUD's AHAR report to Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to Link</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No (no PII)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seasonality</strong></td>
<td>Conducted March 29-31, 2010</td>
<td>Throughout the year</td>
<td>Fiscal year: October-September</td>
<td>All shelter use in the given time frame</td>
<td>One night in January; varies by CoC, year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Sources on Homelessness cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>2010 Decennial</th>
<th>ACS</th>
<th>HMIS National Estimates</th>
<th>HMIS Microdata</th>
<th>HUD PIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects asked whether they had usual home elsewhere; de-duplication attempted.</td>
<td>Cross-section of individuals experiencing homelessness.</td>
<td>Called “period estimates” by the Census; approximately point-in-time estimates.</td>
<td>Anyone who experienced homelessness in a given time period.</td>
<td>Anyone who experienced homelessness in a given time period.</td>
<td>Cross-section of individuals experiencing homelessness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology Notes</td>
<td>Post-2010, whole person records imputed into not-in-sample GQs.</td>
<td>Extrapolates to non-HMIS shelters to form national estimates.</td>
<td>Data quality issues include incomplete reporting of shelter spell start/end dates.</td>
<td>Methodology varies by CoC using a variety of HUD-approved methods.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative-ness</td>
<td>Unsheltered counts may not be complete (see 2010 Census Special Report). Doesn’t include all HMIS shelters.</td>
<td>Uses MAF as basis for sampling. Frame expanded after 2010 Decennial. Doesn’t include all HMIS shelters.</td>
<td>Only federally funded shelters required to report; some shelters report voluntarily.</td>
<td>Ratio of HMIS-covered beds to total beds varies by year and CoC; median coverage rate 80-85% in most years.</td>
<td>PIT counts are run by local CoCs. Quality of count varies by CoC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Literature on demographics

- Despite difficulties of studying people experiencing homelessness, several demographic patterns have emerged in the literature:
  - Blacks are overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness, especially shelter homeless and people in families (Burt et al. 2001, AHAR 2007-2018, O’Flaherty 2019)
  - Most single homeless adults are male; most homeless adults in families are female (Metraux et al. 2018, AHAR 2007-2018)
  - Veterans are disproportionately represented, but their share has declined substantially since 2010 (O’Flaherty 2018, AHAR 2018)
    - 8.6% of homeless individuals in the 2018 PIT were veterans, compared to 11.7% in 2010
  - Mixed evidence regarding the “paradox” of infrequent homelessness among Latinos (Conroy and Heer 2003)
  - Homelessness is more common in urban settings than in rural, but has been becoming more suburban in recent years (Lee, Tyler, and Wright 2010)
Veteran Status and Functional Limitations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages 18-64</th>
<th>Sheltered Homeless</th>
<th>Single Poor Non-GQ</th>
<th>Non-GQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veteran (%)</td>
<td>14.20 (2.05)</td>
<td>3.64 (0.16)</td>
<td>6.98 (0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has VA Disability Rating (%)</td>
<td>1.95 (0.45)</td>
<td>0.74 (0.08)</td>
<td>1.26 (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Remembering or Making Decisions (%)</td>
<td>23.27 (2.00)</td>
<td>11.05 (0.25)</td>
<td>4.06 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Dressing or Bathing (%)</td>
<td>3.12 (0.56)</td>
<td>4.09 (0.15)</td>
<td>1.75 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Walking or Climbing Stairs (%)</td>
<td>16.77 (1.31)</td>
<td>12.26 (0.24)</td>
<td>5.15 (0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Doing Errands Alone (%)</td>
<td>7.56 (0.87)</td>
<td>8.48 (0.23)</td>
<td>3.38 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Hearing (%)</td>
<td>5.40 (0.67)</td>
<td>3.11 (0.17)</td>
<td>2.09 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Seeing (%)</td>
<td>6.44 (0.87)</td>
<td>4.22 (0.19)</td>
<td>1.69 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Physical or Cognitive Disability (%)</td>
<td>35.26 (2.38)</td>
<td>21.71 (0.34)</td>
<td>9.87 (0.07)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Size - Ages 18-64: 1,900, 17,000, 264,000

Source: 2010 American Community Survey
All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.

Literature: Employment and Earnings

- Metraux et al. (2018) examine New York homeless shelter users longitudinally using SSA data (presumably the DER)
  - Examines those ever shelter homeless between 1990 and 2002
  - Rates of employment around 45 percent during year of shelter use; higher for single adults (80% male) than adults in families (93% female)
  - Slight dip in employment for singles, some for families around onset of homelessness
  - More of a dip in earnings around onset of homelessness
  - Emphasizes heterogeneity by single or family, gender, pattern (persistence) of homelessness
- Rossi (1989); Burt and Cohen (1989); Burt et al. (1999) reported similar (or slightly lower) employment rates in the past month
  - Rossi reported employment estimates of about 30-40% in the last month, using studies that focused on both sheltered and unsheltered in Chicago
  - The NSHAPC found 44% of homelessness service users interviewed had worked in the last 30 days
Literature: Program Receipt

- 1996 National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients (NSHAPC) collected self-reported program receipt data from a nationally representative sample of homelessness service users (Burt et al. 1999)
  - NSHAPC found that 8 percent of homeless people surveyed were receiving SSDI, and 11 percent were receiving SSI (despite much higher estimated disability rates)
  - NSHAPC indicated that 52 percent of homeless families were receiving AFDC (precursor to TANF)
  - NSHAPC indicated that 31 percent of homeless single adults were receiving food stamps, compared to 71 percent of people in homeless families

Pre-Tax Income

![Graph showing median pre-tax income in administrative data for different years and categories](image)


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.
Pre-Tax Income & In-Kind Transfers

Median of Pre-Tax Income and In-Kind Transfers in Administrative Data (Ages 18-64 in 2010)

Year observed as homeless or poor

2010 Dollars, Chained CPI-U-Adjusted

Sheltered Unsheltered Single Poor


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.

Pre-Tax Income by Sub-Group

Median Pretax Income in Administrative Data, 2010 (Ages 18-64)

2018 Dollars, Chained CPI-U-Adjusted

Male Female White Black Unsheltered Sheltered


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.
Pre-Tax Income and In-Kind Transfers by Sub-Group

Median Pretax Income & In-Kind Transfers, 2010 (Ages 18-64)

2018 Dollars, Chained CPI-U-Adjusted

Unsheltered Sheltered

Male Female White Black


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.

Benefit Receipt by Sub-Group

SNAP Receipt, 2010 (Ages 18-64)

VA Benefit Receipt, 2010 (Ages 18-64)

HUD Benefit Receipt, 2010 (Ages 18-64)


All results were approved for release by the Census Bureau, authorization number CBDRB-FY20-ERD002-007.
Medicare and Medicaid by Sub-Group

Possible Reasons for Differences

- **Time Frame**
  - Many people experiencing homelessness cycle into and out of shelters fairly rapidly (Metraux et al. 2018, O’Flaherty 2019)
  - Point prevalence: PIT, Decennial, and ACS (approximately)
  - Period prevalence: HMIS data used to estimate number of homeless shelter users during fiscal year (October-September)
  - Point-in-time samples give greater weight to individuals with longer or more frequent spells

- **Seasonality**
  - ACS reflects annual average, but doesn’t show pronounced seasonality
  - HUD PIT at night in the last ten days of January
  - Decennial count conducted March 29-31, 2010
Possible Reasons for Differences

- Coverage
  - Only PIT includes individuals in domestic violence shelters
  - Higher count of females and children
- Completeness
  - HMIS shelter list maintained by local organizations (CoCs) – perhaps more complete than the shelter list used by Decennial and ACS
  - Completeness of PIT unsheltered count likely varies by CoC
  - Census report on homeless enumeration acknowledges it may be incomplete
- Misclassification
  - In Decennial, individuals interviewed at unsheltered locations were asked whether they had a usual home elsewhere, and records were de-duplicated using probabilistic matching
  - Most do not answer question about usual home elsewhere – in the end we assume these individuals are homeless, but that is not verified – key caveat

PIKed vs unPIKed Characteristics

- Characteristics of PIKed and unPIKed homeless individuals in the 2006-2016 ACS
  - Age, gender, race
  - Hispanic origin, born outside the U.S
  - Whether worked in the last year; if report any income receipt
- Many unPIKed individuals are missing sufficient information (name or date of birth) to be PIKed
Recent Trends in California and NY

**PIT Estimates - New York and California**

**PIT Estimates - New York and California Cities**


Note: All data obtained from publicly available sources. San Francisco Bay includes the following CoCs: San Francisco, Contra Costa County, Marin County, Alameda County, San Mateo County, and Santa Clara County. LA, OC, and SD includes: Los Angeles, Pasadena, Glendale, Long Beach, Orange County, and San Diego.

Recent Rises in California and NY

**California PIT Estimates**

**New York City PIT Estimates**


Note: All data obtained from publicly available sources. San Francisco Bay includes the following CoCs: San Francisco, Contra Costa County, Marin County, Alameda County, San Mateo County, and Santa Clara County. LA, OC, and SD includes: Los Angeles, Pasadena, Glendale, Long Beach, Orange County, and San Diego.