

DEATHS AMONG HOMELESS PEOPLE IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

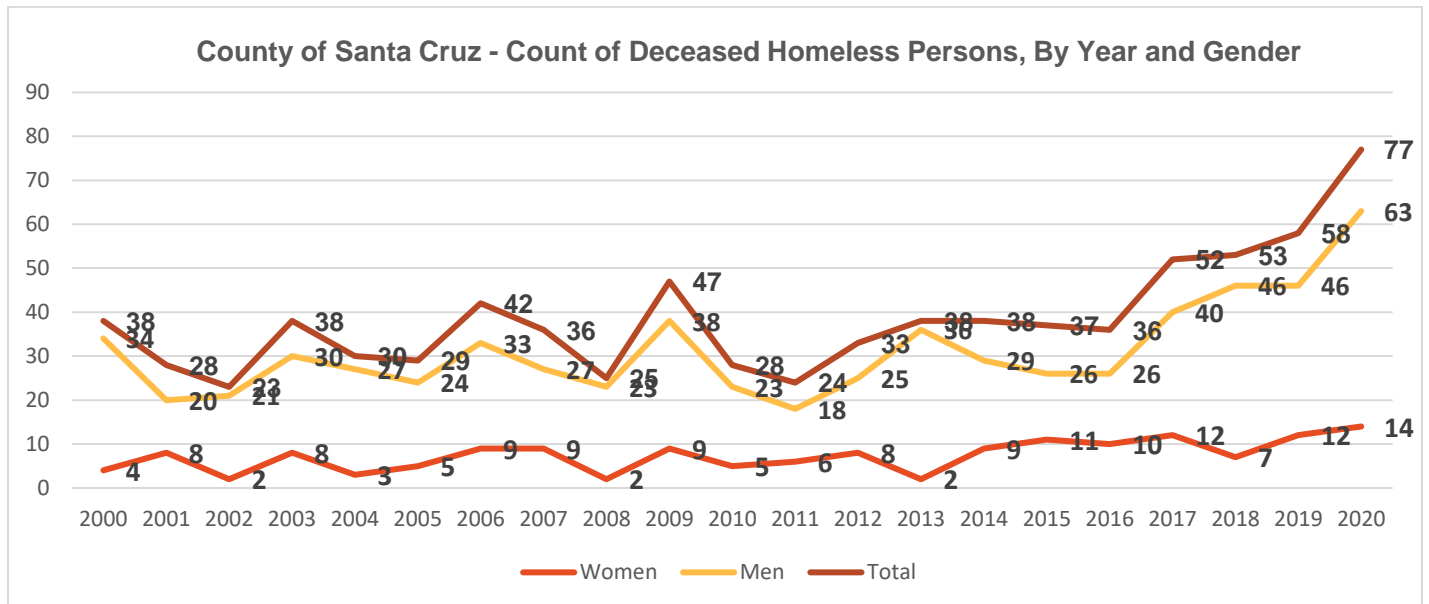
DECEMBER 20, 2019 – NOVEMBER 6, 2020

	Housed	Homeless	
Santa Cruz Population	270,446	2,109 ⁴	
Deaths in 2020	1,884	77	
% of Total	0.7%	3.7%	
	1 in every 144	1 in every 27	Homeless people died at ~5.4 times the rate of the housed population

Homeless People died at ~5.4 times the rate of the rest of the county population this past year.

	Housed	Homeless
Santa Cruz Deaths	1,850	77
Deaths of men 40 and under	65	14
Deaths of women 40 and under	23	1
Total	88	15
	4.8% of population	19.4% of population

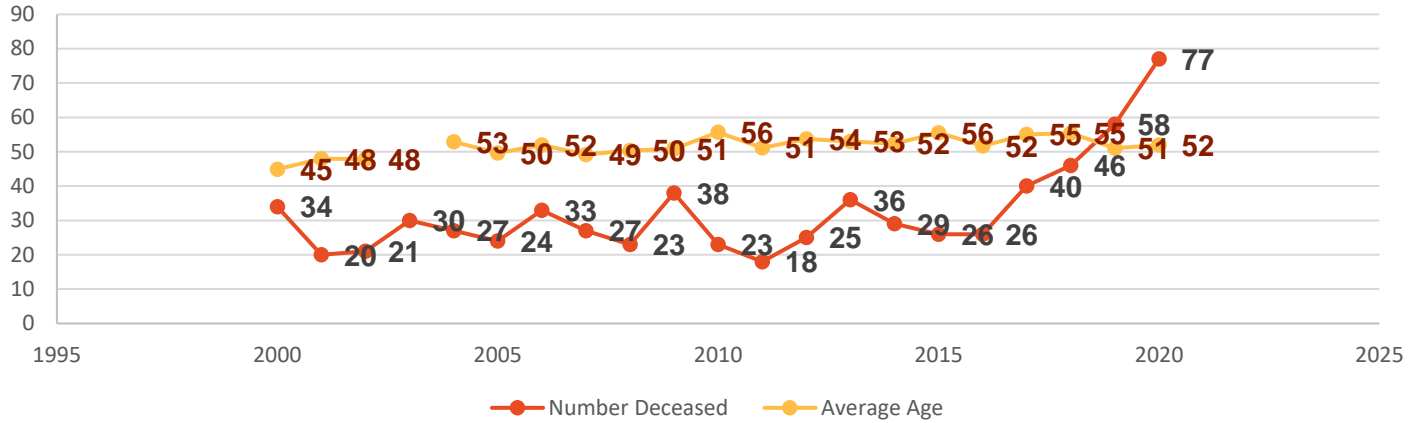
Homeless people 40 years old and under died at 4x the rate of those who were housed.



It has been four 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.

⁴ PIT count from 2019 of 2,167 less the 58 people who died last year.

County of Santa Cruz - Count of Deceased Homeless Persons, By Year and Gender



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.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Number of Homeless Deaths: 77

By Gender:

Male: 63
Female: 14

By Age:

Under 21: 1	41-50: 15	over 70: 4
21-30: 6	51-60: 25	
31-40: 8	61-70: 18	

Lifespan:

	Housed	Homeless
Average Lifespan	75.25	52.19
Men	71.96	51.59
Women	79.30	54.93

Race:

White: 55
Hispanic/Latino: 18
Native American: 1
Black: 2
Middle Eastern: 1

Location at time of Death:

Outside: 21	Santa Cruz: 49
Hospital: 22	Watsonville: 4
Skilled Nursing Facility: 5	Data Not Yet Available: 15
Temporary Residence/Other: 15	Out of County: 9
Shelter: 8	
Data Not Yet Available: 6	

Most Likely Primary Factor Leading to Death

Cardiac Disease/Failure: 15
Respiratory Failure: 4
Sepsis: 5
Undetermined/Pending: 34
Killed: 3
Accident: 3
Substance Use Related/Overdose: 10
Other: 3

How data on homeless deaths is collected:

Throughout the year, HPHP staff maintain a log of deaths that occur among people who are homeless 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 Coroner's office, 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 homeless 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 70 people who were homeless at their death and are reflected in our annual report. We will also read the names of an additional 41 individuals who were previously homeless and died this year. 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 the River Street Shelter, Housing Matters, HPHP, 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.

