

# California Has the Most Unsheltered Homeless People

24/7 Wall St., by Trey Thoencke, March 5, 2017, 5:55 am EST

According to the latest U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development report to Congress of annual estimates of homelessness across the nation, California has the largest share of homeless residents who are unsheltered, at 66.4%. These are individuals who are homeless but are not staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs or safe havens.

24/7 Wall St. recently reviewed the share of each state's homeless population that is unsheltered, based on the latest data from HUD. An estimated 32.1% of the 549,928 homeless individuals nationwide were unsheltered in January 2016, nearly 15,000 fewer than there were in the first month of 2015, a 3% decline.

Such factors as cost of living and median home value are closely related to the incidence of homelessness. The cost of living in California is higher than the national average, and the median home value exceeds the national median of \$194,500 as well. Like some other states with sizable unsheltered homeless populations, California has a high rate of overall homelessness. The national average ratio of homeless people to total population is one in every 588 people, while in the golden state it is one in 332.

A look at California from the recent 24/7 Wall St. review of the states with the most unsheltered homeless people:

## 1. California

- > **Homeless w/o shelter:** 66.4%
- > **Prevalence of homelessness:** 1 in 332.2 people
- > **Homeless population:** 118,142
- > **2016 unemployment:** 5.4% (tied – 9th highest)

Nearly two-thirds of California's homeless population is unsheltered, the highest proportion of all states. Because of its large population, California is home to 21.5% of all homeless people living in the United States, by far the largest such share.

Homelessness is first and foremost a problem of affordability, and like other states with relatively large homeless populations, California is not especially affordable. Goods and services in the state cost on average 12.4% more than across the nation. The problem also does not appear to be improving. While homelessness has steadily declined across the nation — falling by 2.6% last year — California's homeless population grew by 2.1% in 2016. In the summer of last year, Gov. Jerry Brown, in response to the growing problem, voiced his support for a \$2 billion plan to build housing for the state's mentally-ill homeless population.

California beat out Hawaii and Oregon to top this list. In other recent 24/7 Wall St. analyses, California was also among the states with the most green card holders and the highest gas taxes, as well as the longest life expectancies but the most past-due medical debt.

To identify the states with the most unsheltered homeless people, 24/7 Wall St. reviewed the percentage of each state's homeless population that is unsheltered from the HUD report, The 2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness. We also reviewed for each state the median annual household income, poverty rates, median home values and share of households receiving SNAP benefits (food stamps) from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey. Cost of living in each state was obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

For the full methodology and to see the other states with the most unsheltered homeless people, see the complete 24/7 Wall St. analysis. <http://247wallst.com/special-report/2017/03/02/states-with-the-most-unsheltered-homeless-people>