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2021 HOLLYWOOD HOMELESS COUNT SHOWS DECREASE IN UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

Hollywood coalition ensures homeless neighbors are counted, noting much work still remains

HOLLYWOOD, CA – A new count of people experiencing homelessness in Hollywood and East Hollywood found a 12 percent decline in the total number of unsheltered people from last year.

Volunteers at the [2021 Hollywood Homeless Count](#), organized by members of the Hollywood 4WRD coalition, counted **1,513 unsheltered people in the 40 tracts defining Hollywood and East Hollywood compared to 1,714 in the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Homeless Count in [Hollywood and East Hollywood](#)**.

The number of people living completely exposed dropped by 30 percent, with the number of people in tents and vehicles remaining roughly the same. While the overall number of unsheltered people decreased, the number of tents and makeshift structures on the streets drastically increased in approximately 28 percent of the census tracts throughout Hollywood, including tracts south of the Walk of Fame and Barnsdall Park.

Due to concerns about conducting the count during the pandemic, [LAHSA canceled the 2021 Homeless Count](#). However, the Hollywood community was eager to know the data and trends that could inform the impact of activities in Hollywood. Having frontline, hands-on experience during the pandemic, members of the Hollywood 4WRD coalition were confident they could organize a survey that would maintain the health and safety of everyone involved.

“It’s the right thing to do. We want to continue to make progress towards ending homelessness. Heather Carmichael, a board member of Hollywood 4WRD and Executive Director of My Friend’s Place said, “Hollywood is unique in that we have a robust coalition of service providers, business leaders, residents, and government agencies dedicated to humanely housing everyone in the community. And we work well together. So we were able to do the count safely and efficiently.”

Hollywood 4WRD board member and Central Hollywood Neighborhood Council (CHNC) representative Louis Abramson, who led the data collection and analyses, shared, “Having that data to compare year to year is so important so we know what is working; and so we can educate residents, funders, and legislators, and really keep community stakeholders informed. We are grateful to all the volunteers who counted, and the USC/UCLA Homeless Count Methodology Team who reviewed our work to ensure the results were accurate.”

On the night of Thursday, February 25th, volunteers arrived at The Center in Hollywood where, like a fast-food drive-thru, they were in and out in a matter of minutes to pick up instructions and tally sheets. Training was conducted online ahead of the event and volunteers stayed in their vehicles with their pandemic pods the entire time. Outreach teams from Covenant House and The Center in Hollywood surveyed harder-to-reach areas during the day.

While the numbers of people on the street have decreased, some may argue the aesthetics suggest otherwise. “Visually, it looks like there are more people on the street. But anecdotal impressions are not always right and so we have to trust the data,” said Steve Fiechter, board member of Hollywood 4WRD and Senior Director at PATH. “This survey shows that interventions can help those struggling with housing insecurity. As we begin to put the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, we must not lose our focus on providing the services and resources that work.”

Several factors may contribute to the decrease in the number of people living on the streets in Hollywood. More shelter and housing options came online this year, including the state’s Project Roomkey program, Safe Parking, a new Bridge Home, and at least 120 permanent supportive housing units in the area. It is also important to consider that [deaths of people experiencing homelessness rose more than 30 percent in 2020 county wide](#).

Those who continue to be unsheltered appear to be suffering at a greater level overall. With libraries, shops, and restaurants closed, there are fewer places for people to access restrooms, trash receptacles and more. Scarce resources for our unhoused neighbors to maintain dignified and hygienic living conditions, such as handwashing stations and bathrooms, have contributed to the deterioration of people’s physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Helen Eigenberg, a Hollywood resident and active volunteer shared, “While the numbers may be down, people’s conditions are worsening which is visibly evident.” Helen has watched one person in particular deteriorate before her eyes. “Members of Hollywood 4WRD will continue to advocate to bring more solutions and resources to end homelessness, faster. We welcome the support of the community to amplify our voice and the voice of our unhoused neighbors.”

Some members of the Hollywood 4WRD coalition that organized the 2021 Hollywood Homeless Count include the Central Hollywood Neighborhood Council, My Friend’s Place, Hang Out Do Good, The Center in Hollywood, and the Saban Community Clinic. Approximately 75 people volunteered to count with their pandemic pods from their vehicles.

Data and information on the 2021 Hollywood Homeless Count can be found at bit.ly/HollywoodHomelessCount. Anyone interested in learning more about homelessness or wishing to volunteer and advocate for solutions to homelessness, can reach out to Hollywood 4WRD on their site.

About

Hollywood 4WRD is a coalition driven to create systemic change to effectively address homelessness in Hollywood through advocacy, education, service coordination, and innovation. The coalition is composed of businesses, nonprofit organizations, faith groups, individual residents, and government representatives in Hollywood. Learn more at www.hollywood4 wrd.live/.

Photos and videos from the 2021 Hollywood Homeless Count can be found [here](#) for media use.

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