

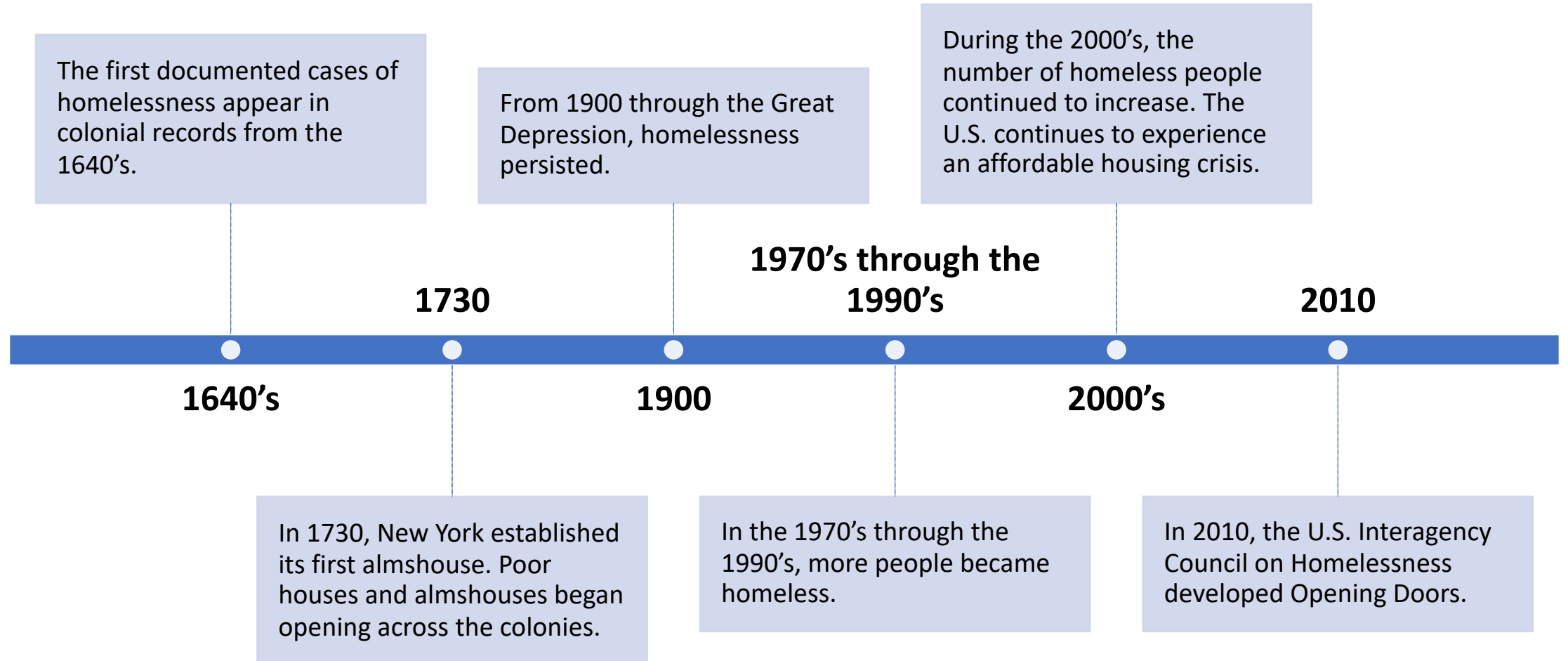
The background image shows a homeless encampment on a city sidewalk. Several tents in orange, blue, and red are pitched along the curb. Bicycles are parked nearby, and some personal belongings like a cooler and bags are scattered around. In the foreground, there is a pile of discarded trash. The background features a modern building with large windows and trees with green foliage.

Individuals with Disabilities Experiencing Homelessness

Allie Ulness

SW 405

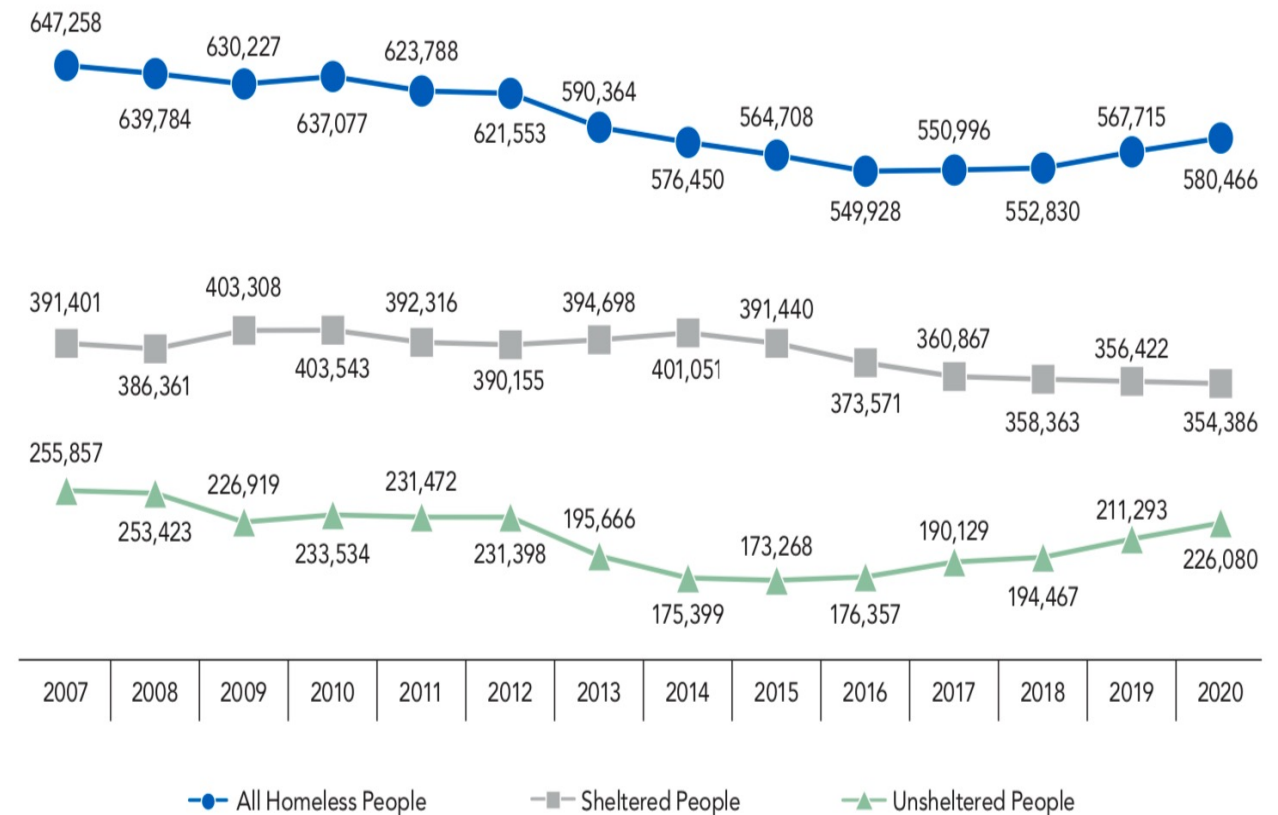
History



Stats

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) report found that between 2019 and 2020, homelessness increased significantly among unsheltered populations and people experiencing chronic homelessness.
- On a single night in January 2020, 580,466 people – about 18 of every 10,000 people in the United States – experienced homelessness across the United States. This represents 2.2 percent increase from 2019.
- On a single night in January 2020, there were 110,528 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, just over one-quarter of all homeless individuals.

EXHIBIT 1.1: PIT Estimates of People Experiencing Homelessness
By Sheltered Status, 2007–2020



Types of Homelessness

Chronic Homelessness: Chronic homelessness is defined as being homeless for longer than a year. Many times, people struggling with chronic homeless have something that is preventing them from fighting their way out of it whether that be mental illness, a physical disability or addiction specifically.

Episodic Homelessness: Can turn into chronic homelessness. It's defined as a person that has experienced three episodes of homelessness within a given year.

Transitional Homelessness: This is one of the more common types of homelessness. This form of homelessness is defined as affecting a person that is going through a major life change or catastrophic event. Generally, enter the shelter system for only one stay and for a short period

Hidden Homelessness: Hidden homelessness often goes unreported. These are individuals that are couch-surfing without immediate prospects for permanent housing.

Why are People Homeless?

Low-paying jobs

Lay-offs

Serious illnesses or accident

Lack of income

Loss of a loved one or divorce

Lack of support networks

Evictions

Foreclosures

Poverty

Natural disasters (i.e. hurricanes, floods)

Fires

*Do disabilities cause
homelessness, or is it the
other way around?*

Disabilities and Homelessness

- Federal policies, such as those regulating wages and supplemental security income (SSI), influence homelessness among people with disabilities.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is not enough to cover the expenses of everyday living.
- Stigma and discrimination of people with disabilities
 - Discrimination in employment
 - Discrimination in access to services
 - Discrimination to access of housing

Homelessness and Disabilities

Risks of developing a disability while homeless is substantial, due to:

- Exposure to the elements or to communicable disease in shelters or out in the public.
- Victimization
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Co-morbidities
- Limited access to health care

Poor mental health may also affect physical health, especially for people who are homeless. Mental illness may cause people to neglect taking the necessary precautions against disease.

- Stigma and discrimination create barriers for people with disabilities that are homeless, barriers such as:
 - A lack of accessible and affordable housing
 - A lack of insurance and financial resources
 - A lack of community-based services and/or lack of access to hospital-based care.

Testimonial

Homeless Woman Shares Story, in Los Angeles

"I'm a human being, but sometimes I don't feel like one anymore,"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tVHXHQ09JE>

Homelessness and Self-Esteem

Poverty-stricken individuals have less confidence in their own abilities. Many complain about feelings of being:

- Unsafe
- Unclean
- Uncared for and 'invisible'

Low self-esteem can lead to worse problems if left untreated:

- Suicide
- Substance abuse
- Promiscuity and other risky behaviors
- Self-damaging actions and comments

Skills to Work with this Population



ADVOCACY



BUILD RAPPORT



COMMUNICATION



CRITICAL
THINKING



Abilities/Qualities to Work with this Population

Creating trusting relationships

Empathy towards clients

Mindful

Supportive

Remembering the dignity and worth of a person

References

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