



PROGRESS REVERSED:

After Pandemic Initiatives Drive Homelessness Down,
Soaring Rents Push Numbers Back Up

A Report of the 2023 Point in Time Count
of People Experiencing Homelessness
in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish



UNITY

OF GREATER NEW ORLEANS

LOCAL HOMELESSNESS: A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE 2023 POINT IN TIME COUNT

- Homelessness in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish is up 15 percent over a year ago, erasing the progress made during the pandemic to decrease the numbers of people experiencing homelessness. A total of 1,390 people were living on the street or shelter during the Jan. 23, 2023 Point in Time Count.
- The major factors driving the increase are soaring rents and the drying up of pandemic resources, especially hotels that had been made available for people living on the street and rent assistance for low-income people and those experiencing street homelessness. During the first two years of the pandemic, street homelessness fell by 34 percent as 1,013 people were assisted off the streets of Orleans and Jefferson into hotels, with 75 percent of them subsequently housed in apartments with case management services.
- While the number of people now living on the street is about the same as it was pre-pandemic, the number living in emergency shelter has increased by 26 percent during the same time period, suggesting the numbers of people now living on the street might be even greater had the city not expanded the capacity of the Low Barrier Shelter last year.
- Family homelessness soared 62 percent since last year.
- The 2023 Point in Time Count results suggest that New Orleans and Jefferson are finding it increasingly difficult to counter a national trend of growing homelessness. While locally homelessness decreased 25 percent between 2016-2022, on a national level homelessness rose 6 percent during the same time period. National data for 2023 is not yet available, but most experts expect an increase given soaring rents nationwide. New Orleans had enjoyed significant annual decreases in homelessness every year from 2009 until 2019, but at that point the influx of people newly experiencing homelessness began to exceed the number of homeless people able to obtain permanent housing.
- Veteran homelessness continues to be a relative bright spot, with the number of veterans on the street or shelter down 36 percent since last year. The reason for this success is the relative wealth of federal housing resources available to homeless veterans and the community's success at quickly identifying veterans experiencing homelessness and expediting their access to these resources.
- The age of unhoused people is climbing. About a third are over age 55, and the number of people experiencing homelessness who are over 64 has increased by 31 percent over the past five years.

- 65 percent of the unhoused population is Black, but Latino homelessness is growing. There has been a 78 percent increase in Latino homelessness since pre-pandemic. Latinos are now 5 percent of the local unhoused population. Discrimination in housing, employment and education are believed to be significant factors in determining who experiences homelessness.
- 38 percent of adults experiencing homelessness have no high school diploma or GED.

ABOUT THE POINT IN TIME SURVEY

The 2023 Homeless Point in Time (PIT) Count for New Orleans and Jefferson Parish took place on January 23, 2023, utilizing more than 200 staff and volunteers of the nearly 60 agencies that make up the New Orleans/Jefferson Parish/City of Kenner Homeless Continuum of Care.

The Point in Time Count, conducted by UNITY of Greater New Orleans and its partner agencies, is the annual comprehensive survey of all homeless persons in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish. It is conducted each January in order to provide as comprehensive and accurate a tally as possible of how many persons are homeless during one 24-hour period in emergency shelter, in homeless transitional housing, and in places not meant for human habitation on any given night. The Point in Time Count is required, and its scope and methodology governed, by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The intent is to provide information with which to better understand the nature and extent of homelessness in the New Orleans area, and to provide information with which to gauge the need for resources to end and prevent homelessness and the type of resources needed.

Staff and volunteers fanned out across the City and Jefferson Parish to administer surveys on the streets and parks and in homeless programs and other locations where homeless people are known to gather, asking homeless people where they had stayed the night of January 23 and asking certain demographic information.

In addition to the annual Point in Time survey, UNITY of Greater New Orleans and its partners also do street surveys at other times of the year. In partnership with its member agency, VIA Link, UNITY also maintains a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in which all of its funded agencies, as well as those funded by the City of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish under their HUD Emergency Solutions Grant programs, and many VA-funded programs, enter data on all clients. HMIS data can provide information on how many homeless people are served over a longer period of time, which is a larger number than that on any given night, since most homeless people are only homeless for a matter of days, weeks, or months. HMIS data typically does not include people who have not received services, whereas the PIT Count includes those not receiving services.

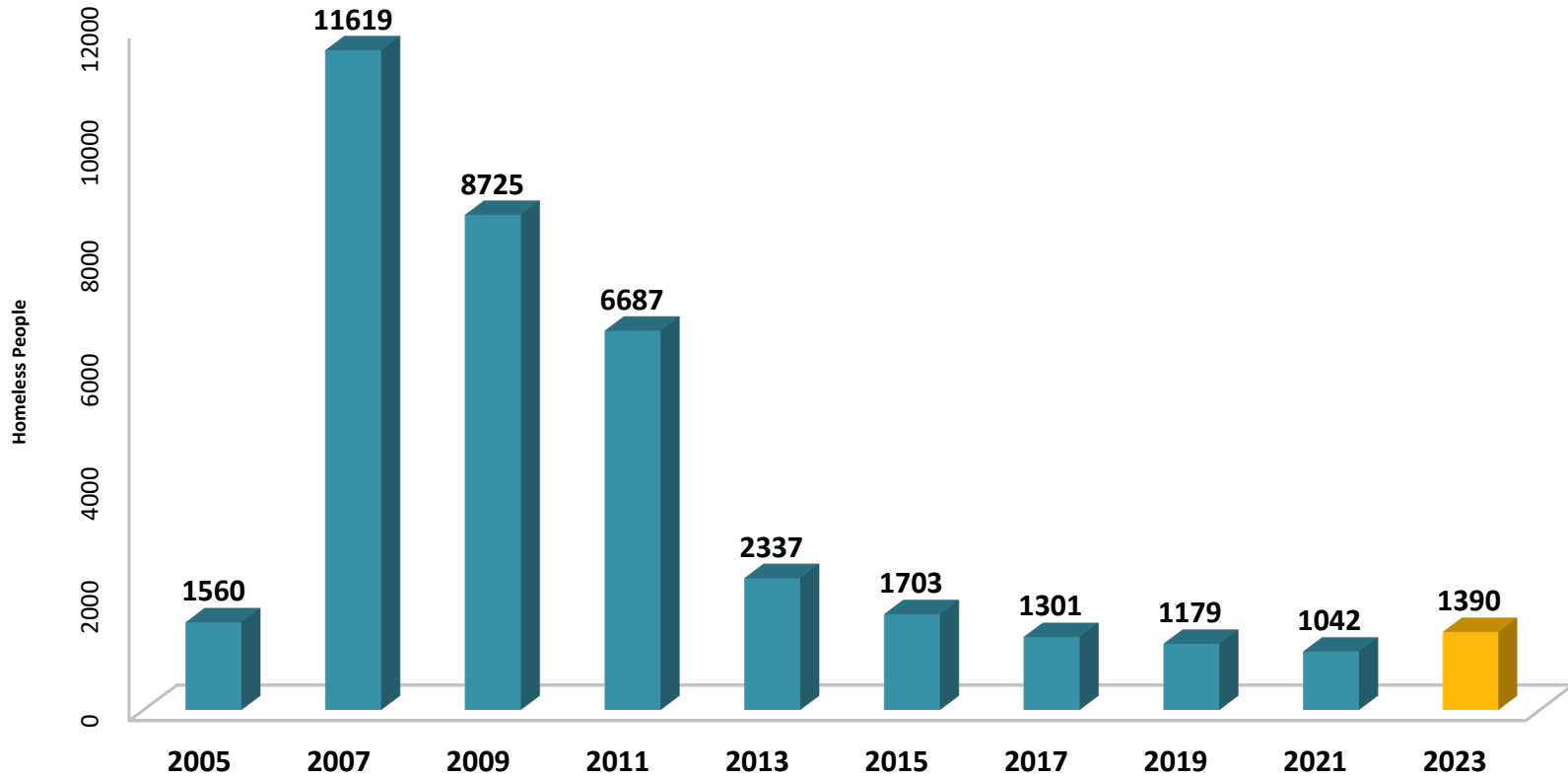
ABOUT UNITY

The Point in Time Count is coordinated by UNITY of Greater New Orleans, a nonprofit organization designated by the federal government to lead the Homeless Continuum of Care of housing and services for New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, a collaborative of about 60 nonprofit and governmental agencies. Founded in 1992, UNITY's mission is to coordinate community partnerships to prevent, reduce and end homelessness. In partnership with HUD, the City of New Orleans, Jefferson Parish government and the City of Kenner, UNITY secures and distributes to its member agencies nationally competitive grants to provide housing and services to the homeless. UNITY also trains its member agencies on evidence-based and emerging best practices and oversees the work of the collaborative.

In 2014, in partnership with the City of New Orleans, the VA, the Housing Authority of New Orleans, and the CoC agencies, UNITY coordinated the implementation of the successful effort to make New Orleans the first city to reach a "functional zero" in veteran homelessness by housing all homeless veterans who would accept housing. UNITY's Rapid Response System for Homeless Veterans ensures, to this day, that any newly homeless veterans are housed in apartments within an average of 30 days of being found on the street or shelter, if they will accept housing.

In May 2016, the UNITY collaborative reached a similar feat for family homelessness, making New Orleans and Jefferson Parish the first community known to have reduced the average length of time that families with children spend homeless to 41 days or less. These rapid-rehousing standards are maintained by daily coordination of master lists of all homeless veterans and homeless families in the community and weekly meetings of all agencies working with those veterans and families.

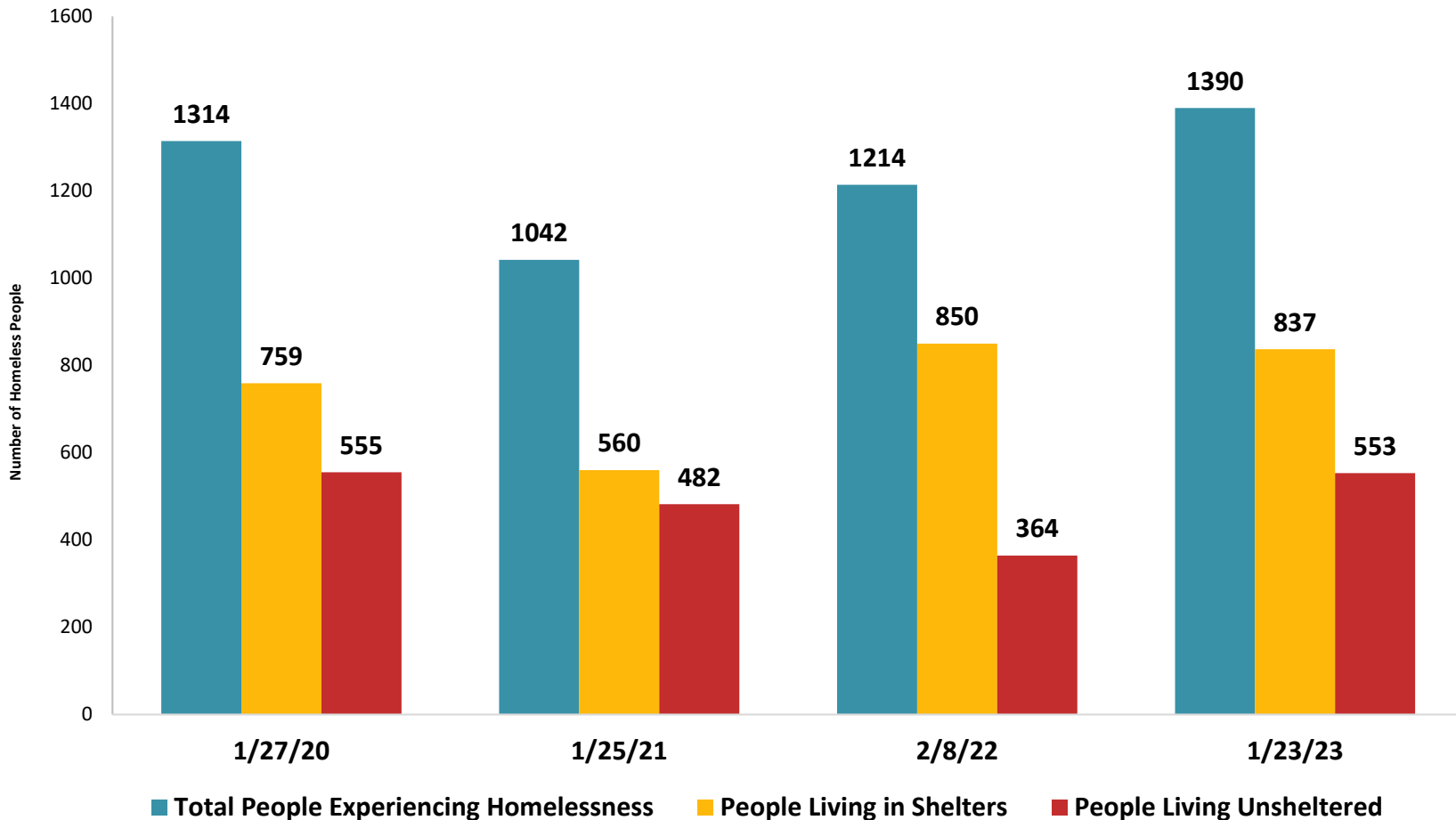
Homelessness is Down 88% Since Post-Katrina High, But is On the Rise Again



According to UNITY’s annual January Point-in-Time Counts, the number of people experiencing homelessness in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish is down 88 percent since the post-Katrina high in 2007. Point-in-Time Counts aim to comprehensively count and interview every person experiencing homelessness during a single 24-hour period. The pre-Katrina count of January 2005, which was conducted prior to the creation of federal rules for the count, has been adjusted to remove persons who do not meet HUD’s definition of literal homelessness, so as to allow for a more accurate comparison year to year. The 2007 count was an estimate submitted to HUD.

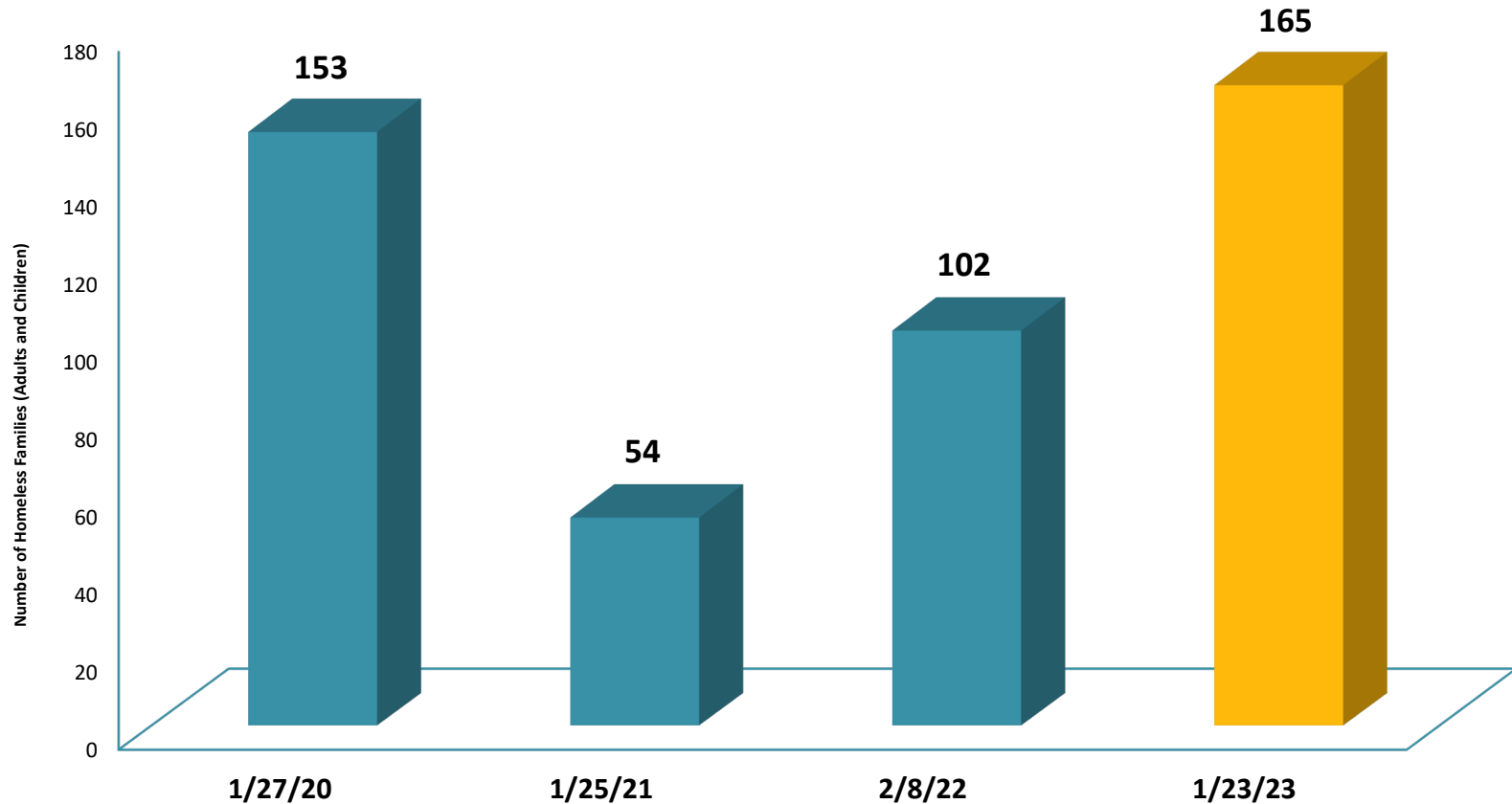
Homelessness Up 15% Since 2022

Progress in Reducing Homelessness Vanishes as Rents Soar & Pandemic Resources Dry Up



By HUD definition, people experiencing homelessness are considered “sheltered” if they live in emergency shelters, hotels paid for by government or nonprofits, or transitional housing. People experiencing homelessness are considered “unsheltered” if they are living on the street, in abandoned buildings or cars.

Number of Children & Adults Experiencing Family Homelessness Soars 62% Since 2022

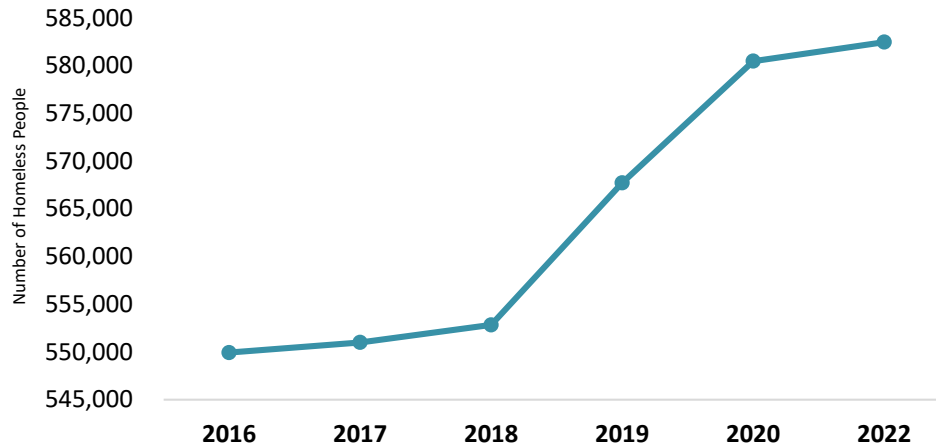


Family homelessness has increased 62 percent in the past year, according to the Point in Time Count. The primary causes are soaring rents and loss of pandemic programs that assisted low-income families. The UNITY collaborative uses Rapid Re-Housing rental assistance, with case management services provided in the home, to re-house families experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible. We have also implemented the strategy of Problem-Solving services and one-time financial assistance to help families resolve housing crises without having to become homeless.

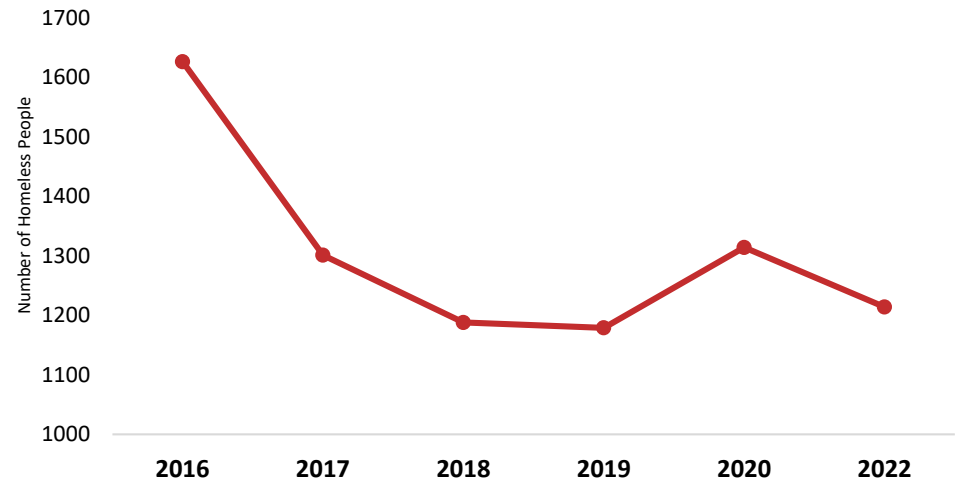
National and Local Trend Lines in Homelessness, 2016-2022

Homelessness Has Risen Nationally Since 2016, While New Orleans, Jefferson Countered National Trend

Homelessness Nationally Rises 6% 2016-2022

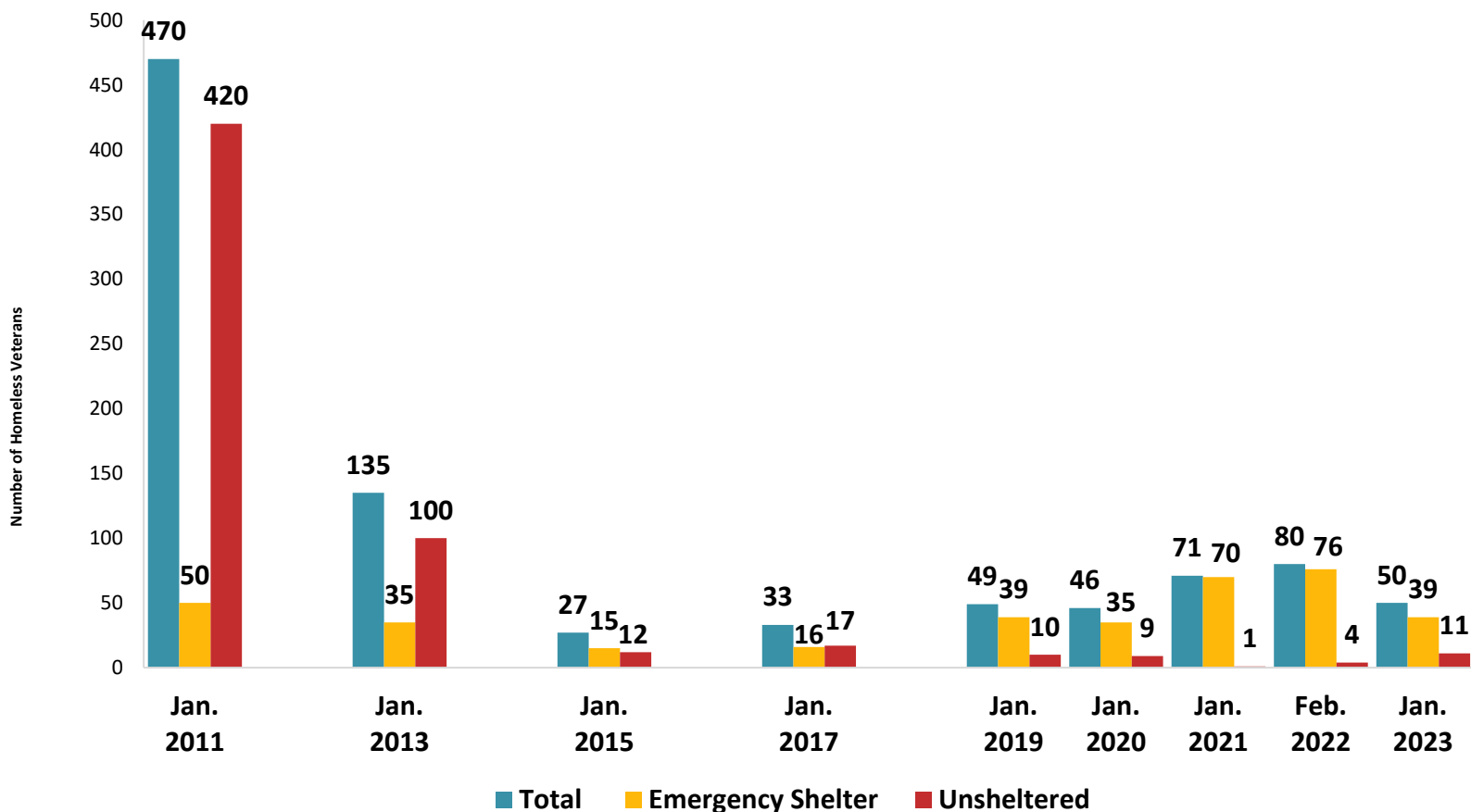


Homelessness Locally Decreases by 25% 2016-2022



National data is not yet available for the 2023 Point in Time Count.

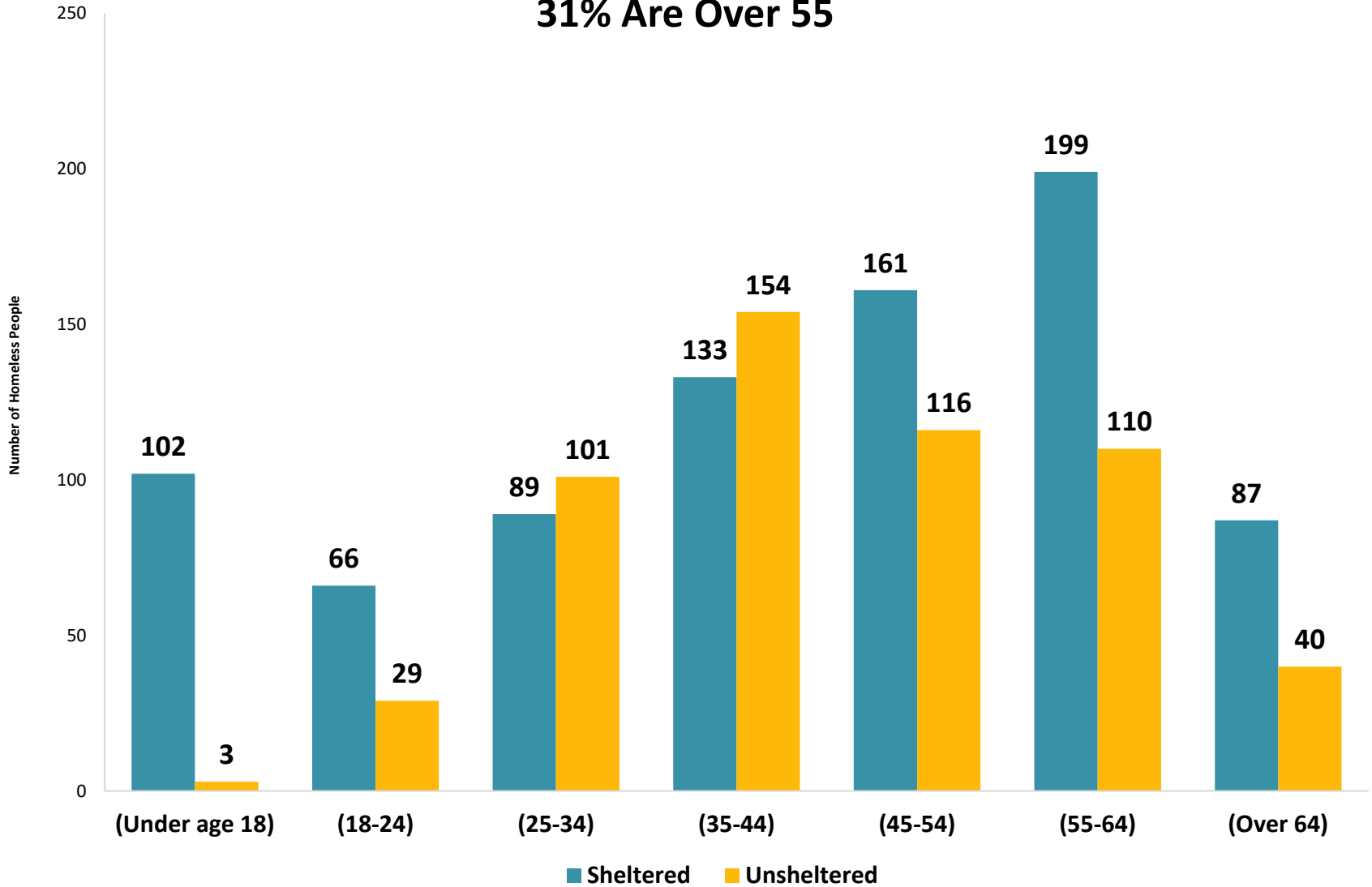
Veteran Homelessness Down 89% Since 2011



Literal homelessness (living on the street or in emergency shelter) among veterans has decreased by 89 percent since 2011. During the pandemic, the VA made hotels available to veterans in need of housing, which counts as homeless shelter. In general, there are many more dedicated federal resources for veterans experiencing homelessness than for any other subpopulation experiencing homelessness. By quickly identifying veterans experiencing homelessness and targeting available resources during a weekly community-wide meeting, we have been able to keep the numbers of veterans experiencing homelessness relatively low, the number on the street very low, and the time they spend in homelessness relatively brief compared to other subpopulations.



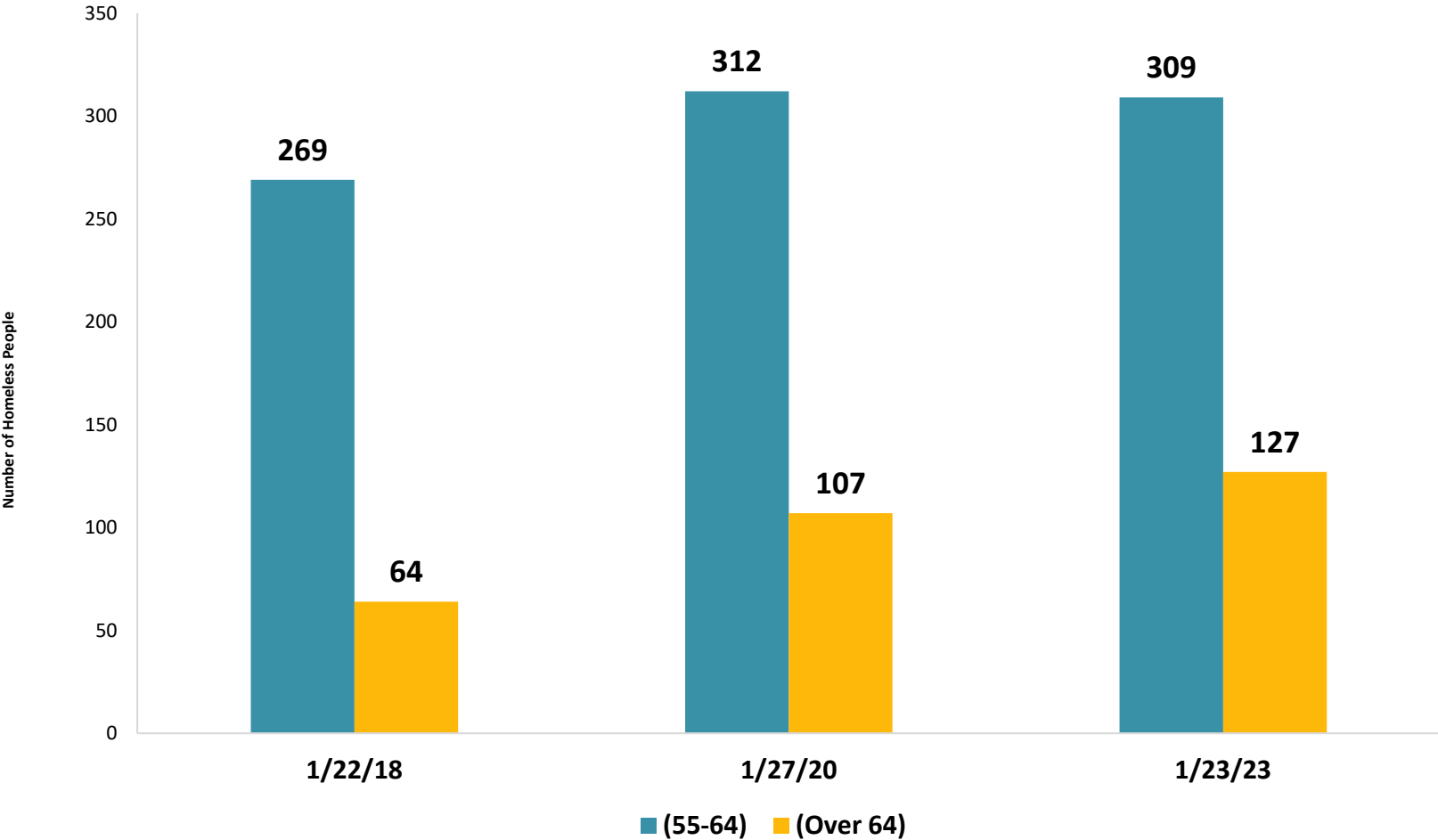
Age of People Experiencing Homelessness: 31% Are Over 55



Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2023 Homeless Point-in-Time Count



Seniors Increasingly Are Experiencing Homelessness

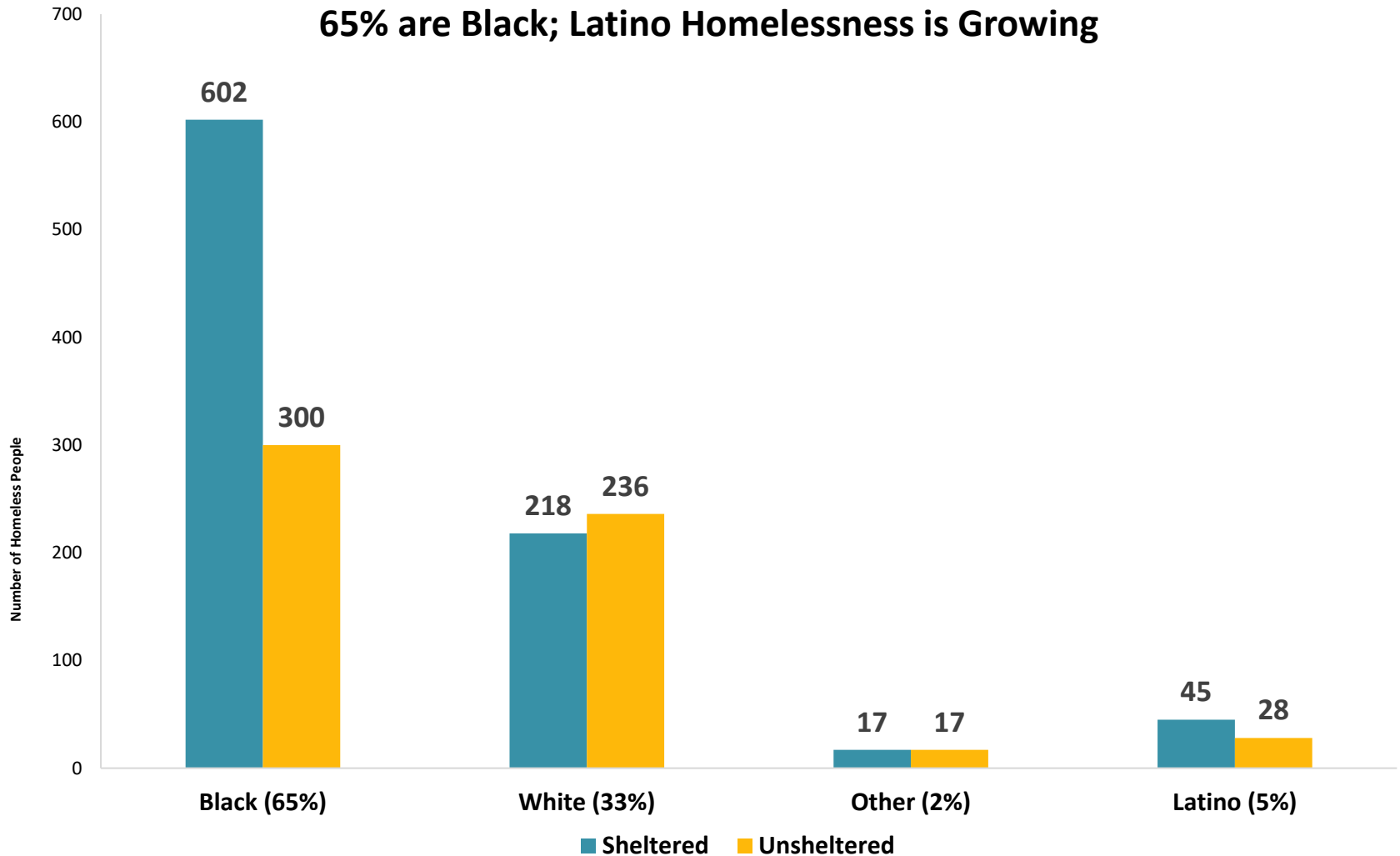


The number of people experiencing homelessness who are over 64 has increased by 31 percent over the past five years.

Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2023 Homeless Point-in-Time Count

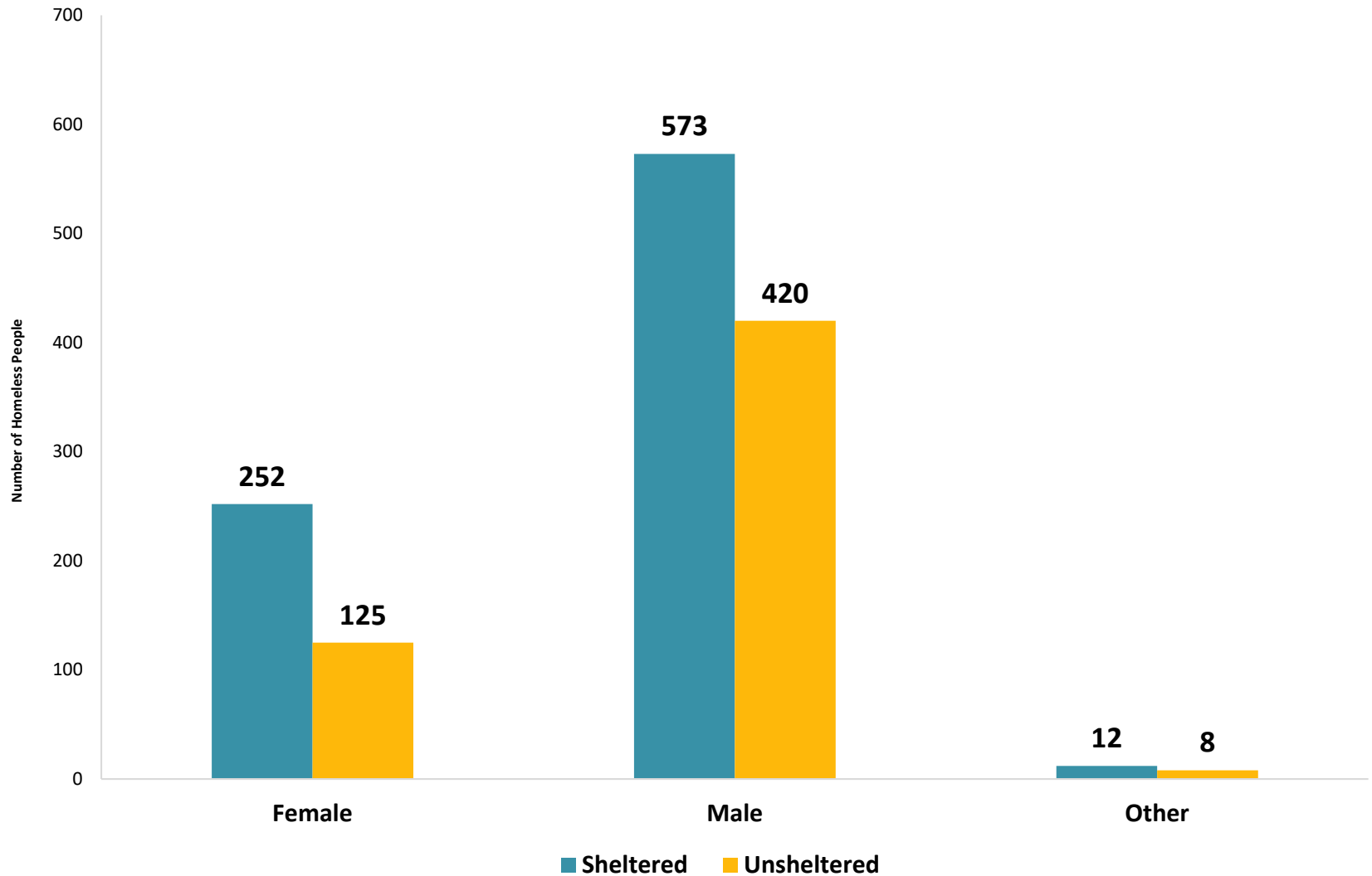


Race and Ethnicity of People Experiencing Homelessness: 65% are Black; Latino Homelessness is Growing



There was a 248% increase in Latino homelessness since 2022, from 21 persons to 73. This was a 78% increase since January 2020, from 41 persons to 73.

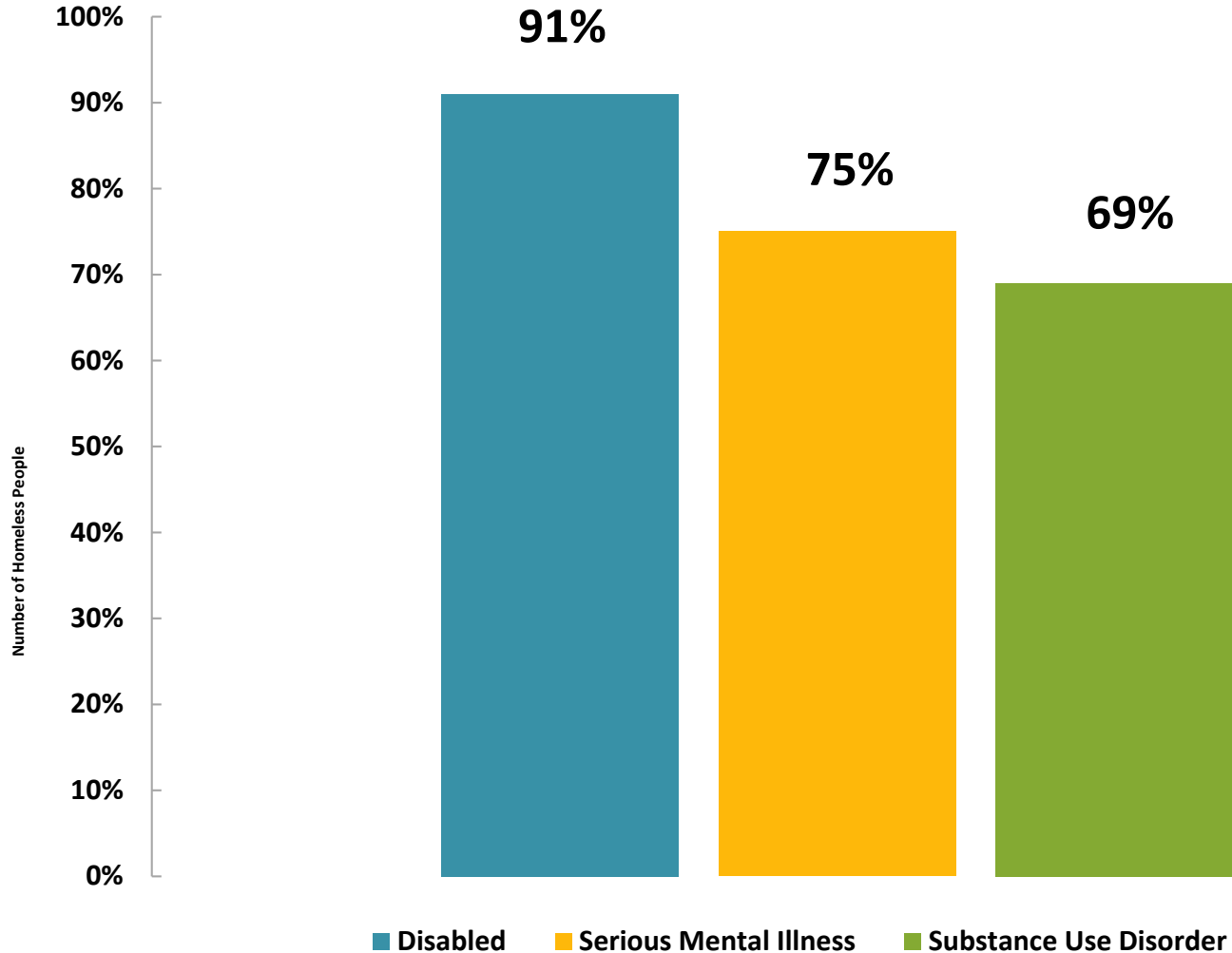
Gender of People Experiencing Homelessness: 71% Are Male; 27% Are Female; 2% Are Trans or Gender-fluid



Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2023 Homeless Point-in-Time Count

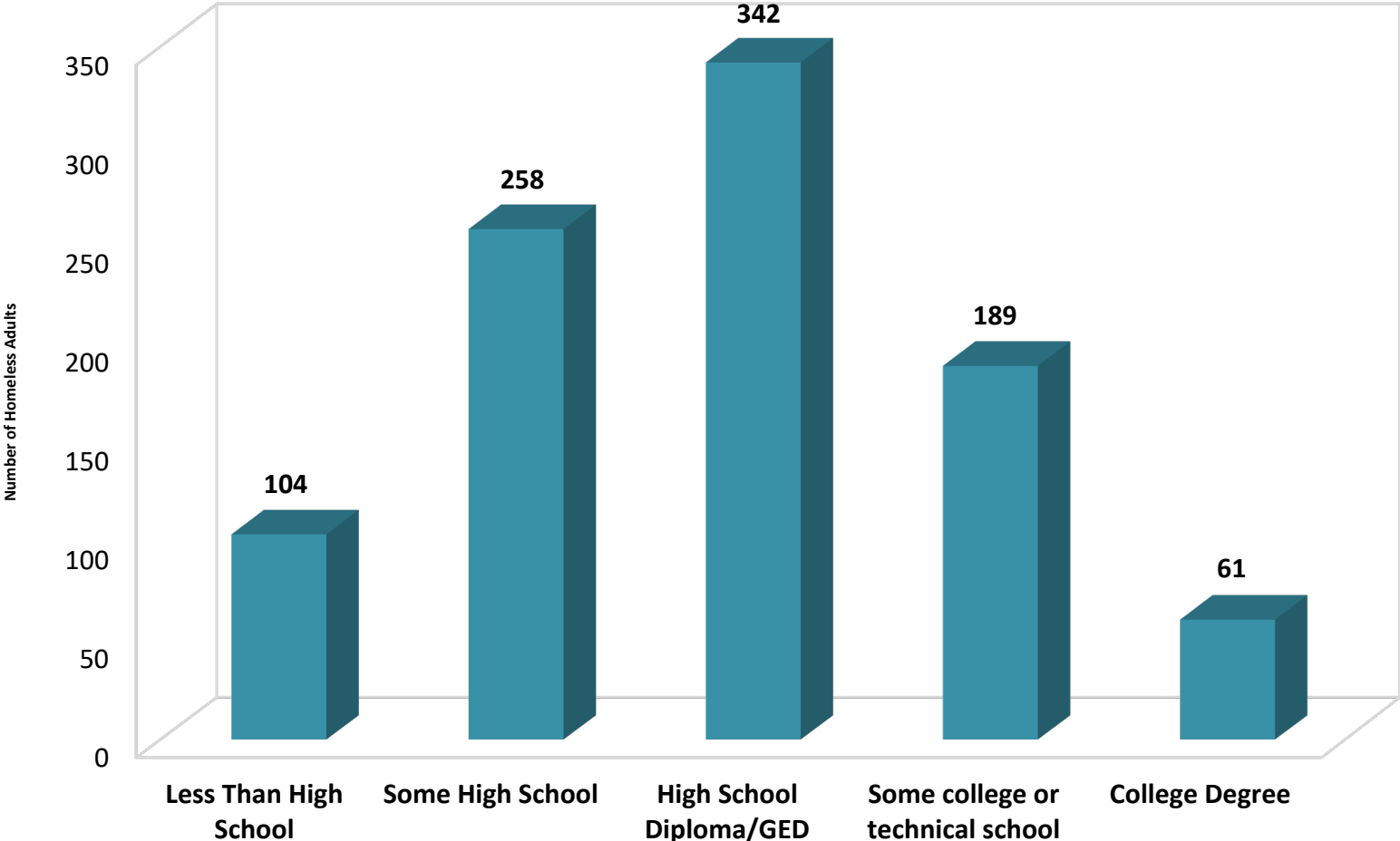


Those Living on the Streets Have High Rates of Disability



This data is taken from professional assessments of 1013 persons assisted to leave the streets and move into hotels during the pandemic, 2020-2022.

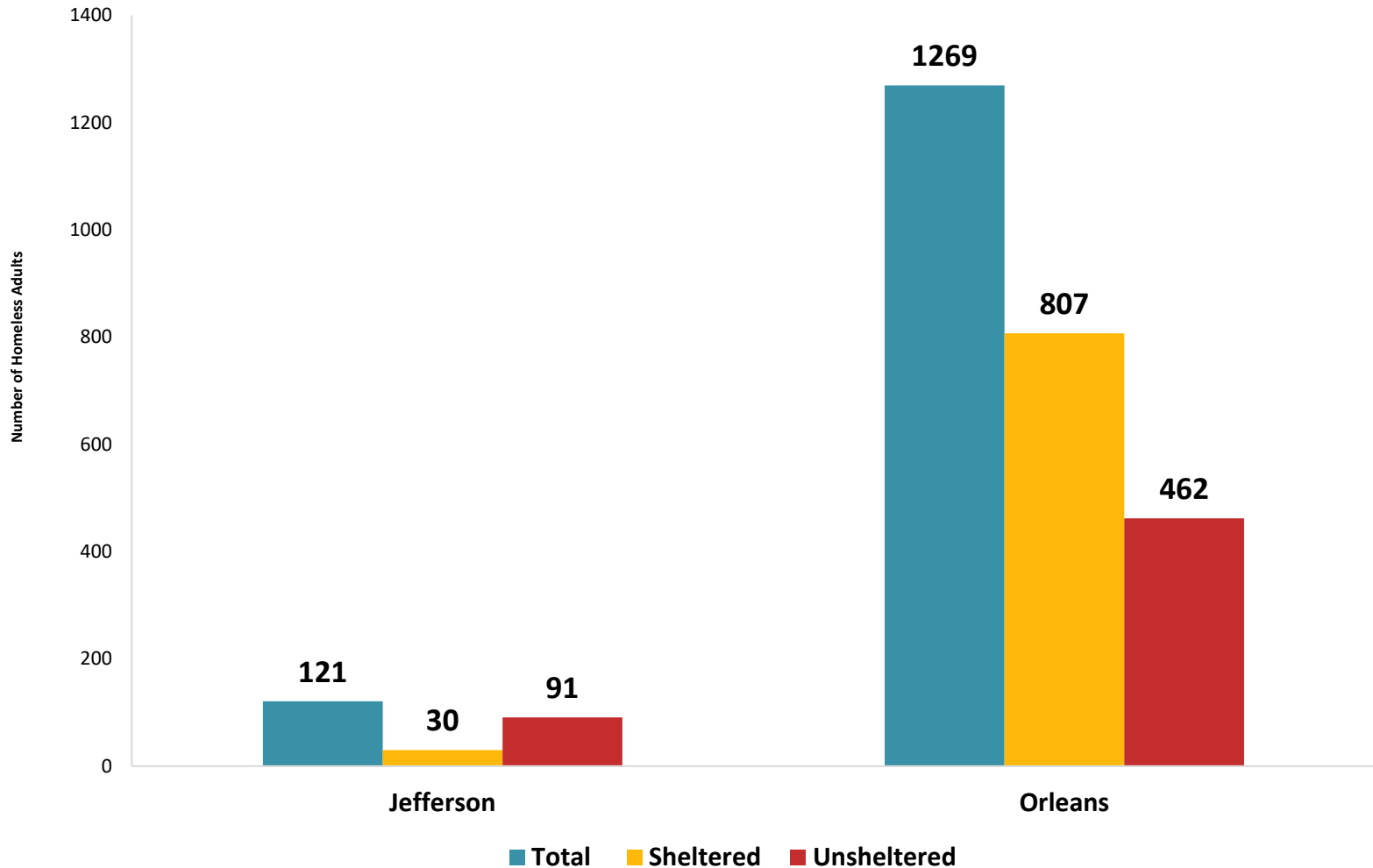
Highest Level of Education Attained by Adults Experiencing Homelessness: 38% Have No High School Diploma or GED



Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2023 Homeless Point-in-Time Count



91% of Persons Experiencing Homelessness in our Community Live in Orleans, While 9% Live in Jefferson



Source: New Orleans-Jefferson Parish 2023 Homeless Point-in-Time Count

