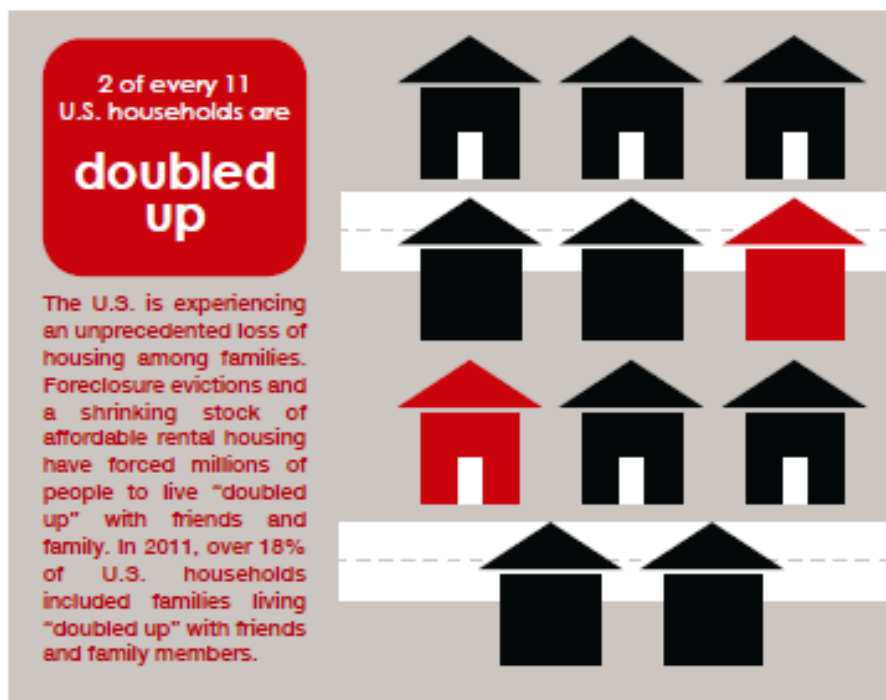


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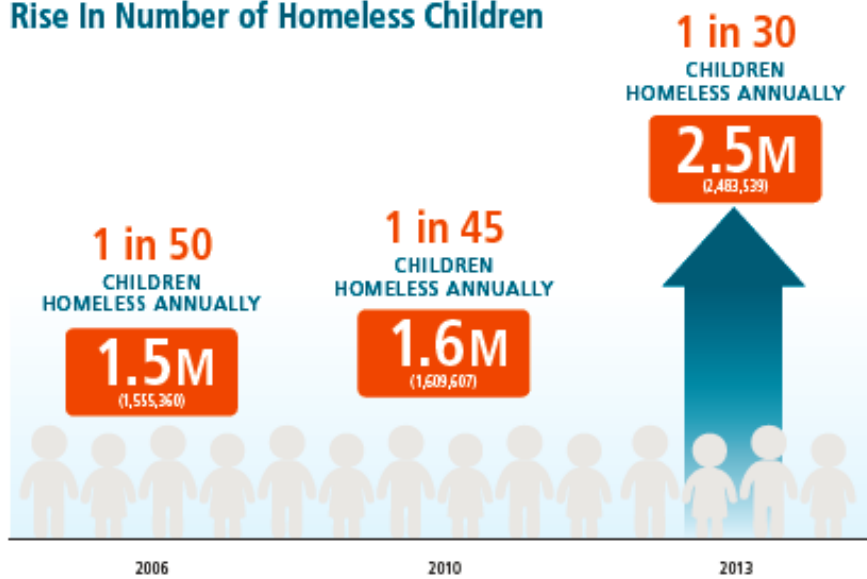
## Homelessness

“Imagine a world where it is illegal to sit down. Could you survive if there were no place you were allowed to fall asleep, to store your belongings, or to stand still? For most of us, these scenarios seem unrealistic to the point of being ludicrous. But, for homeless people across America, these circumstances are an ordinary part of daily life.” These words introduce a 2014 report “No Safe Place: The Criminalization of Homelesses in U.S. Cities” by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. They underline the challenge of homelessness, which affects many people. Homelessness is driven in part by a lack of affordable housing and exacerbated by rising inequality in our country. The quotes and diagrams that follow are from this National Law Center study unless otherwise noted.



The number of homeless children in the United States has grown drastically:

## Rise In Number of Homeless Children







Source: America's Youngest Outcasts: A Report Card on Child Homelessness, American Institutes for Research, November 2014.

With significant variation by state:

## 2. State Ranking: 1 to 50

### State Composite Score

Each state is assigned a rank of 1 (best) to 50 (worst) based on a state composite score that reflects each state's overall performance across four domains:

-  1) Extent of Child Homelessness (adjusted for state population)
-  2) Child Well-Being
-  3) Risk for Child Homelessness
-  4) State Policy and Planning Efforts

Each state received a score for each of the four domains. These are summed to compute the state's composite score to produce the overall state rank of 1 to 50.<sup>2</sup>

### 2013 Composite State Rank

State	Score	State	Score
MINNESOTA	1	OREGON	26
NEBRASKA	2	OHIO	27
MASSACHUSETTS	3	COLORADO	28
IOWA	4	NORTH CAROLINA	29
NEW JERSEY	5	INDIANA	30
VERMONT	6	MISSOURI	31
NEW HAMPSHIRE	7	WEST VIRGINIA	32
PENNSYLVANIA	8	FLORIDA	33
HAWAII	9	DELAWARE	34
MAINE	10	NEW YORK	35
MARYLAND	11	SOUTH CAROLINA	36
CONNECTICUT	12	MICHIGAN	37
WYOMING	13	LOUISIANA	38
NORTH DAKOTA	14	TEXAS	39
VIRGINIA	15	GEORGIA	40
MONTANA	16	TENNESSEE	41
SOUTH DAKOTA	17	KENTUCKY	42
WISCONSIN	18	OKLAHOMA	43
RHODE ISLAND	19	NEVADA	44
WASHINGTON	20	ARIZONA	45
UTAH	21	NEW MEXICO	46
KANSAS	22	ARKANSAS	47
ALASKA	23	CALIFORNIA	48
IDAHO	24	MISSISSIPPI	49
ILLINOIS	25	ALABAMA	50



STATE RANKS: 1=Best, 50=Worst

Top 10 Composite Score	Bottom 10 Composite Score
1. Minnesota	41. Tennessee
2. Nebraska	42. Kentucky
3. Massachusetts	43. Oklahoma
4. Iowa	44. Nevada
5. New Jersey	45. Arizona
6. Vermont	46. New Mexico
7. New Hampshire	47. Arkansas
8. Pennsylvania	48. California
9. Hawaii	49. Mississippi
10. Maine	50. Alabama

Source: America's Youngest Outcasts: A Report Card on Child Homelessness, American Institutes for Research, November 2014.

And within states, significant variations exist by county as shown here for public school enrollees in California, where nearly 270,000 students experienced homelessness in the 2012-2013 school year, twenty-one percent of the homeless students in the United States:

**Figure 1: Percentage of public school enrollees who were recorded as being homeless at any point during the school year, by County (2013).**

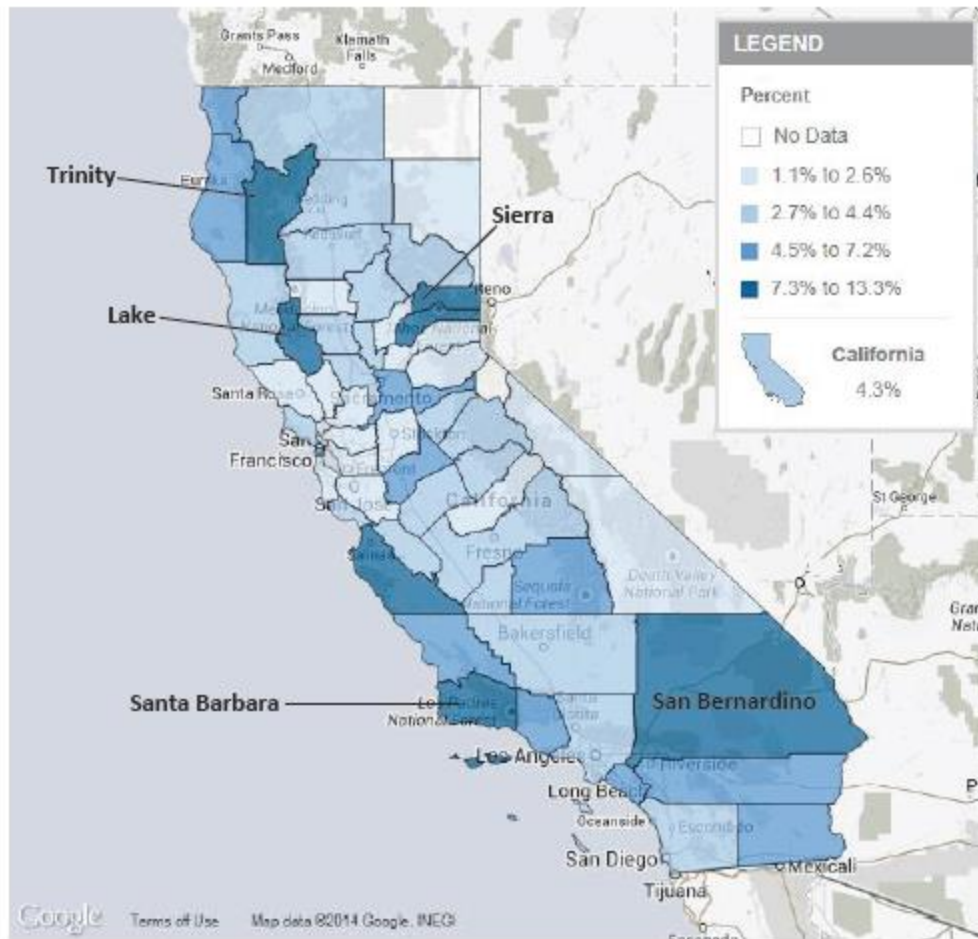


Figure 1.

The five counties with the highest percentage of homeless students are: Trinity (13.3%), Santa Barbara (10.9%), Sierra (9.4%), Lake (8.4%), and San Bernardino (8.1%).

Source: California’s Homeless Students: A Growing Population, California Homeless Youth Project, September 2014.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress in October 2014, nearly one quarter of all homeless people on a given night in January 2014 were children. That means 135,701 children from 578,424 people who were homeless.

Runaway and homeless youth on the street are particularly vulnerable to victimization:



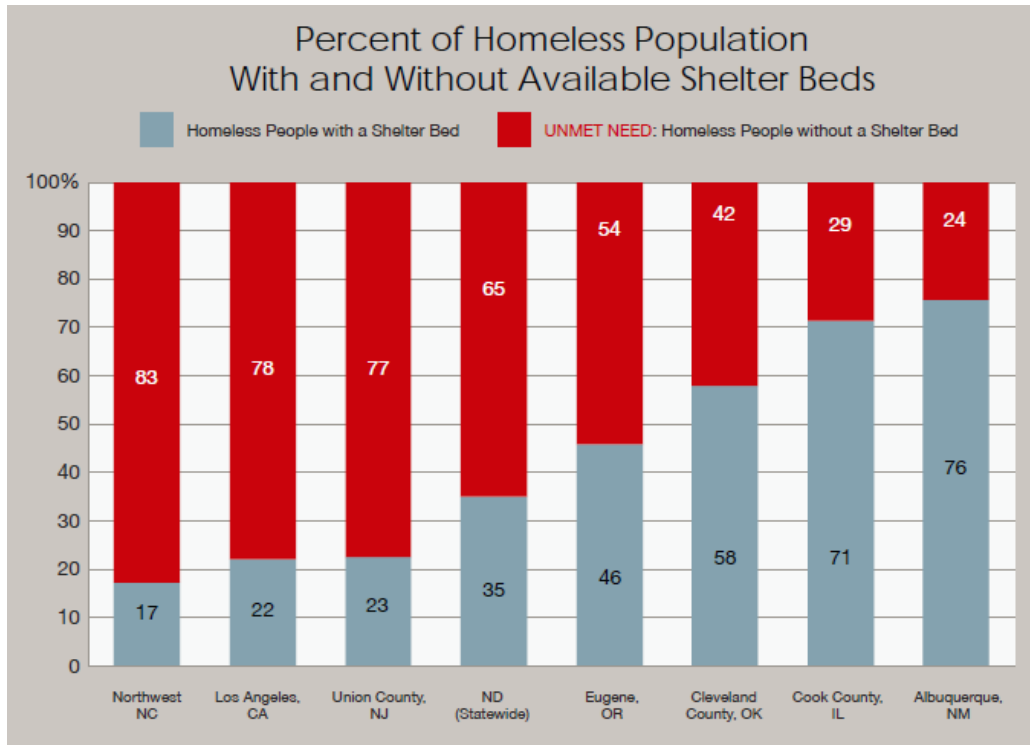
Source: Street Outreach Program, Data Collection Project Executive Summary, Family and Youth Services Bureau, October 2014.

Not surprisingly 62% report struggling with depression. Most were homeless because they were asked to leave by a parent or caregiver, could not find a job, or because they were physically abused or beaten.

Various circumstances can lead to homelessness, for example declining relevance of job skills for adults. The following quote underlines the importance of maintaining a valued skill set. “What led up to my becoming homeless was that I was laid off from a job which I had had for several years and... my house burned down... What I realized was that my skills had become less relevant and I wasn’t all that employable... I had 20th century work skills... I was a purchasing agent... The world’s changed. Anyone with an apartment number and an internet connection can basically find what they need. It’s just not relevant anymore... I didn’t have a relevant, marketable skill.”

– John Harrison, Formerly Homeless Person

While career development can help address such situations there is also great need for public policy to address housing needs as illustrated in the following chart where the shortage of shelter beds is shown for selected locations:



Leading to much suffering:



“Mr. Smith became homeless after his degenerative joint disease made him no longer able to work in construction. He lived in a camper van for years until it was towed. He couldn’t afford to retrieve it, leaving him with nowhere to reside but in public places in Boise, Idaho, due to frequent overcrowding of area homeless shelters. Mr. Smith was cited for illegal camping and was jailed for a total of 100 days. Due to the arrest, he lost his tent, his stove, and the fishing equipment he relied upon to live.”

## MORE THAN HALF

of cities surveyed ban sitting or lying down in particular places



In 2011, **70 cities** banned sitting down or lying down in public places.

In 2014, **100 cities** banned sitting down or lying down in public places.

This is a **43% increase** in just three years



Eva Marie Martinez, a longtime resident of the Jungle homeless camp, is evicted Thursday, December 4, 2014, from the Story Road site along the Coyote Creek in San Jose, California (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

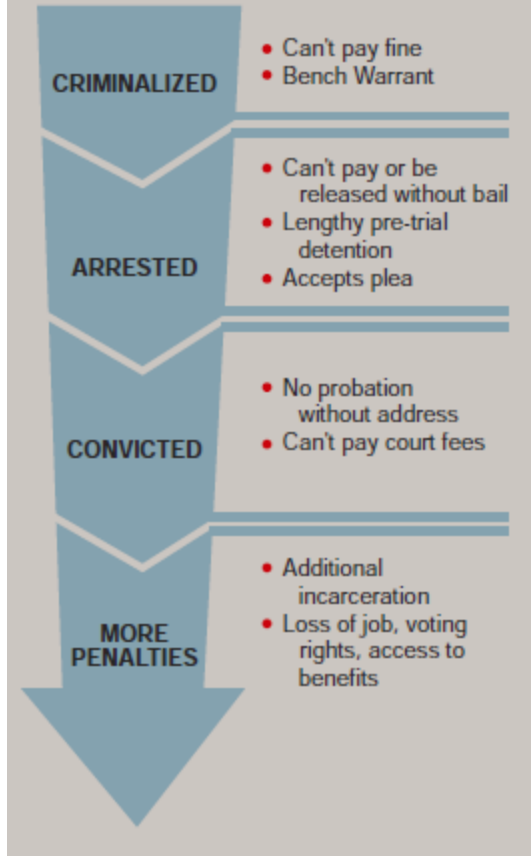
As in this last photograph, sometimes local policy is at odds with the needs of those who are homeless:

“Pastor Rick Wood of Birmingham, Alabama was ordered by police to stop providing hotdogs and bottled water to homeless people in a city park. ‘This makes me so mad,’ Wood told a local news station. ‘These people are hungry, they’re starving. They need help from people. They can’t afford to buy something from a food truck.’”

And those who are homeless can suffer at the hands of our justice system:

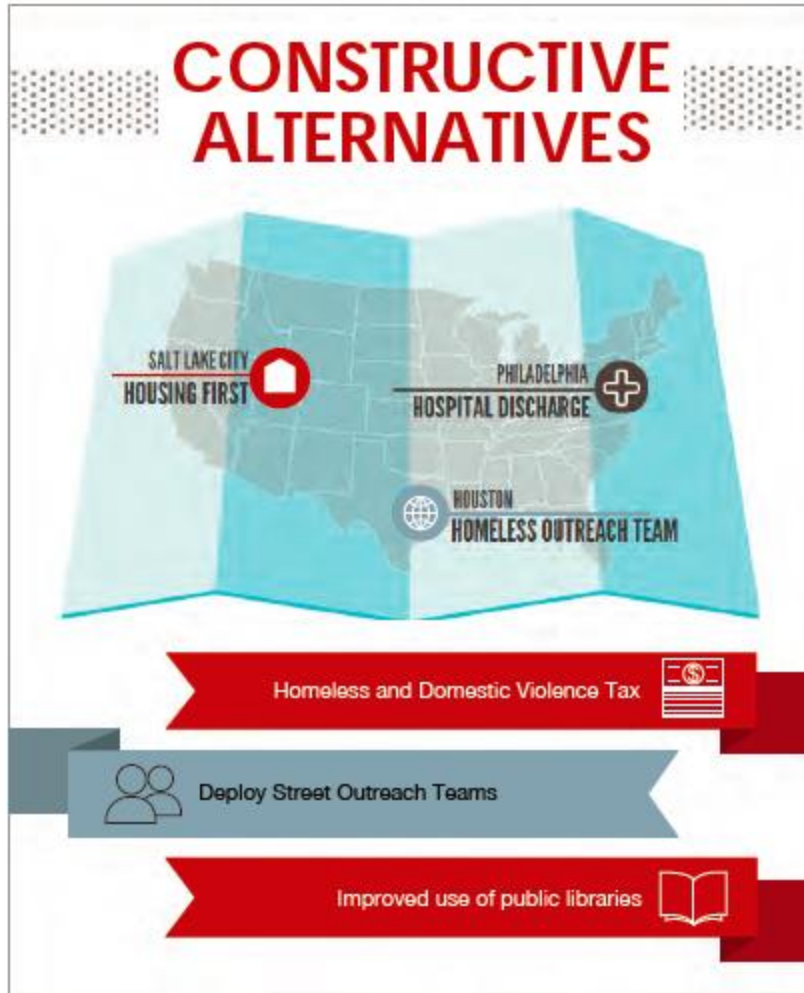


## Homeless Persons' Access to Justice



“On February 15, 2014, a homeless veteran, Jerome Murdough, died of dehydration in an overheated jail cell on Rikers Island in New York City. Arrested for trespassing in a public housing stairwell where he sought shelter from sub-freezing temperatures, he was still in jail five days after his arrest for the “crime” of simply trying to survive.”

There are public policies that can help avoid such awful situations, for example:



“We address not just the homeless issue, but the why they are homeless, whether it’s mental issues or substance abuse. We have providers we can plug them into, and we’ve been pretty successful.”

Police Officer Jaime Giraldo\_of Houston’s Homeless Outreach Team.

It is unconscionable that, in this prosperous society of ours, we accept homelessness as a way of life for many people while others accumulate grotesque amounts of wealth. That we fail to provide adequate shelter and affordable housing. That we tolerate 2.5 million children being homeless. In the words of David Shipler from *The Working Poor* “It is time to be ashamed.” And it is time to advocate within our political system for the needs of all in our society, not just the wealthy and powerful.