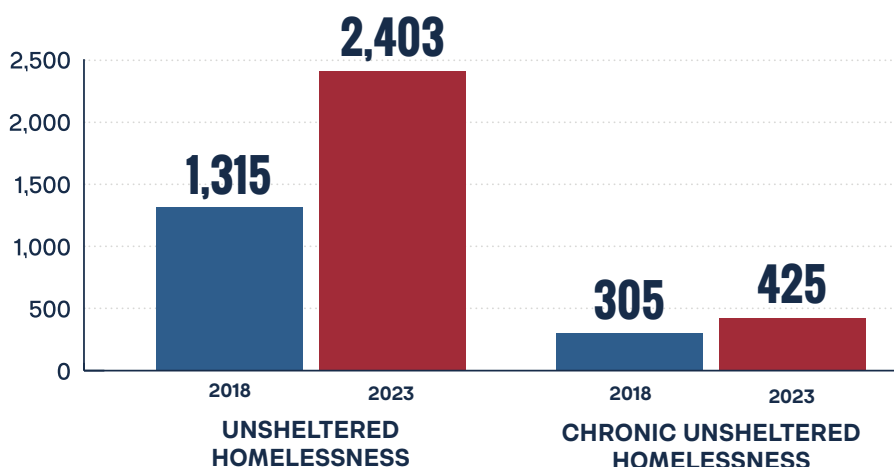


# Homelessness in Ohio

The unsheltered homelessness crisis is worsening in all corners of the United States, including in Ohio, where **unsheltered homelessness** has **increased by 83% in the past five years**.



**Chronic unsheltered homelessness** has **grown by 39%**.



**Substance abuse** among the unsheltered has **increased by 27%**.<sup>1</sup>

Rampant unsheltered homelessness is a **severe threat to public safety**.  
Unsheltered homeless individuals are...



**514X more likely to commit arson** than those with housing.



**130X more likely to commit assault** than those with housing.<sup>2</sup>

It is also a **threat to the safety of homeless Ohioans themselves**.  
More than half of unsheltered homeless individuals report serious mental health issues and face a 74–87% likelihood of being the victim of a crime.<sup>3</sup>

**Ohio must take immediate action to address street camping to protect housed and unhoused citizens alike.**

## THE SOLUTION

A prohibition on public camping would allow Ohio to take a strong stance in addressing homelessness and improve its cities with empathy because it also creates better outcomes for homeless individuals. Camping bans empower law enforcement to act so vulnerable people are not neglected on the street. Instead, they can intervene before a crisis occurs and courts can direct homeless individuals to organizations that provide essential, compassionate services.

This is a proven solution. In other states that have enacted camping bans, police officers and courts have worked together to connect homeless individuals to shelters without leveraging harsh penalties.



In Kentucky, for example, **out of 1,700 total unsheltered individuals, only 19 have received even a misdemeanor-level charge**. Nearly all those charged with misdemeanors or violations have had the opportunity to receive a suspended sentence in exchange for participating in services that support their wellness, such as overnight shelters, substance abuse treatment, and assistance with applying for state IDs.

## WHY IT MATTERS

### Ohio's current approach to homelessness is not working.

Despite five percent growth in subsidized permanent housing and emergency shelter options—and hundreds of millions of federal dollars from the Continuum of Care Grant Program—unsheltered homelessness continues to rise.<sup>4-5</sup> The state is at a crossroads and the choices legislators make now are critical. It needs to change course to safeguard its cities and save the lives of its homeless citizens.

## THE BOTTOM LINE:

There is nothing compassionate about leaving vulnerable people in crisis on the streets in sprawling encampments. Regulating street camping creates a modest pressure through engagement with law enforcement to move people off the streets and into shelters where they otherwise might choose not to.

### SOURCES:

1. <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-dashboards?State=Ohio>
2. <https://www.sdcca.org/content/MediaRelease/Homeless%20Data%20and%20Plan%20News%20Release%20FINAL%203-21-22.pdf>
3. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.201200515>
4. <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-dashboards?State=Ohio>
5. [https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC\\_AwardComp\\_State\\_OH\\_2023.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_AwardComp_State_OH_2023.pdf)

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