

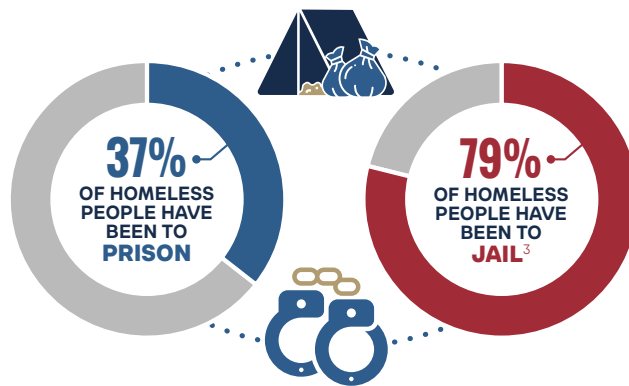
SEX OFFENDERS:

An Overlooked but Significant Subpopulation of the Homeless

The U.S. currently has 771,480 homeless individuals living in shelters or on the street.¹

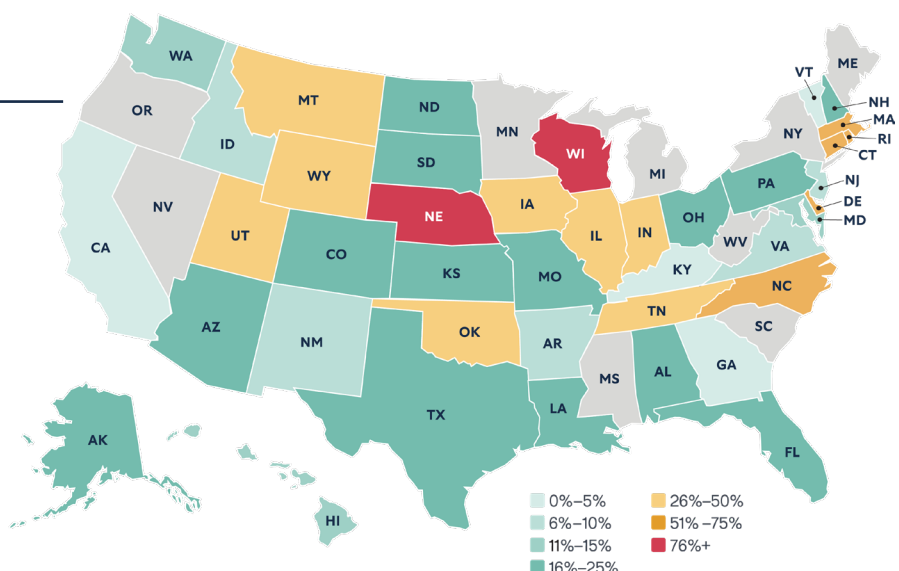
Homelessness has risen in all but seven states.² To monitor changes in homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development tracks various subpopulations, including age, ethnicity, gender identity, and exposure to domestic violence. While homelessness has increased across these categories, there is one subpopulation that has been largely overlooked: homeless sex offenders.

Scholars know that many homeless people have a criminal record.



But little attention has been given to how many homeless people appear on state sex offender registries. When it comes to unsheltered (living on the street) homelessness, sex offenders are a bigger subpopulation than homeless elderly, veterans, or victims of domestic violence in virtually every state. **Between 14 and 20 percent of the average state's unsheltered homeless population is a registered sex offender.** In some states, this number can be as high as **60 percent or more.**

STATES BY PROPORTION OF UNSHELTERED HOMELESS POPULATION ON SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY (LABELED "HOMELESS" OR "ADDRESS UNKNOWN")⁴

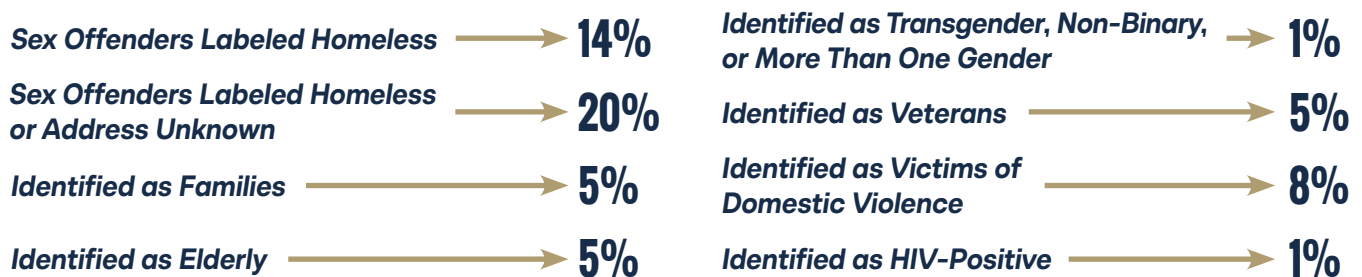


Across the 41 state sex offender registries examined, a total of **21,583 individual sex offenders were identified as homeless**, and another 8,796 sex offenders were classified as “address unknown.”



This is a subpopulation that is **far larger** than any of the selected HUD-tracked subpopulations, such as families, veterans, or victims of domestic violence.

Proportion of Unsheltered Homeless



Sex offenders are an enormous subpopulation of homelessness that merits far more consideration by scholars and policymakers than they have been afforded.

There must be swift action to address this imminent public safety crisis.

States should **enforce camping bans** and **bolster temporary shelter space** to protect the public from a **massive predatory population** living on the streets of American cities.

SOURCES:

1. de Sousa, Tonya and Meghan Henry. “The 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2024. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2024-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>
2. Ibid.
3. Kushel, M., Moore, T., et al., “Toward a New Understanding: The California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness.” UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative, 2023. https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/2023-06/CASPEH_Report_62023.pdf
4. Of 50 states, nine were removed from this study’s sample for various reasons, including refusal of access (Minnesota), inability to provide homeless-specific data (Nevada, New York, Maine, Michigan, West Virginia), or no response (Mississippi, Oregon, South Carolina).

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