

# Youth homelessness is on the rise

By Teresa Wiltz, [Stateline.org](https://www.stateline.org)

They are the nation's invisible homeless population, undercounted for years, hiding out in cars and abandoned buildings, in motels and on couches, often trading sex for a place to sleep. And now, for a complex variety of reasons, the number of youth – teens and young adults – living on the street appears to be growing.

San Diego saw a 39 percent jump in homeless youth over the past year. In Atlanta, the number of homeless youth in 2016 was estimated to be nearly triple that of previous years. After a concerted effort to count homeless young people, Seattle's King County saw its numbers jump more than 700 percent between 2016 and 2017. And the number of homeless, unaccompanied public school students increased one-fifth between 2012 and 2015.

Young homeless people are at risk for a host of troubles with long-lasting impact, including substance abuse, mental health problems and physical abuse, as well as sexual exploitation. Many get caught up in the criminal justice system. Up to 40 percent of homeless youth are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

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