hope NYC

Homeless Outreach Population Estimate
2021 Results

NYC Human Resources Administration / Department of Homeless Services

Department of Social Services

What is the HOPE Survey?

- Annual survey effort conducted in order to estimate the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and sleeping in public places such as streets, parks, and subways on a single winter night.

- Fulfills federal Department of Housing and Urban Development requirement for January "point-in-time" survey of unsheltered individuals.

- Conducted annually since 2005 using same sampling methodology:

  – *All* areas of the city where individuals experiencing homelessness are known to stay (i.e., "high density" areas) based on past surveys and outreach worker observations—all individuals experiencing homelessness in these areas are <u>counted</u>, *and*

  – Random sample of all other areas, termed "low density"—results from these areas used to <u>estimate</u> the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in areas not surveyed.

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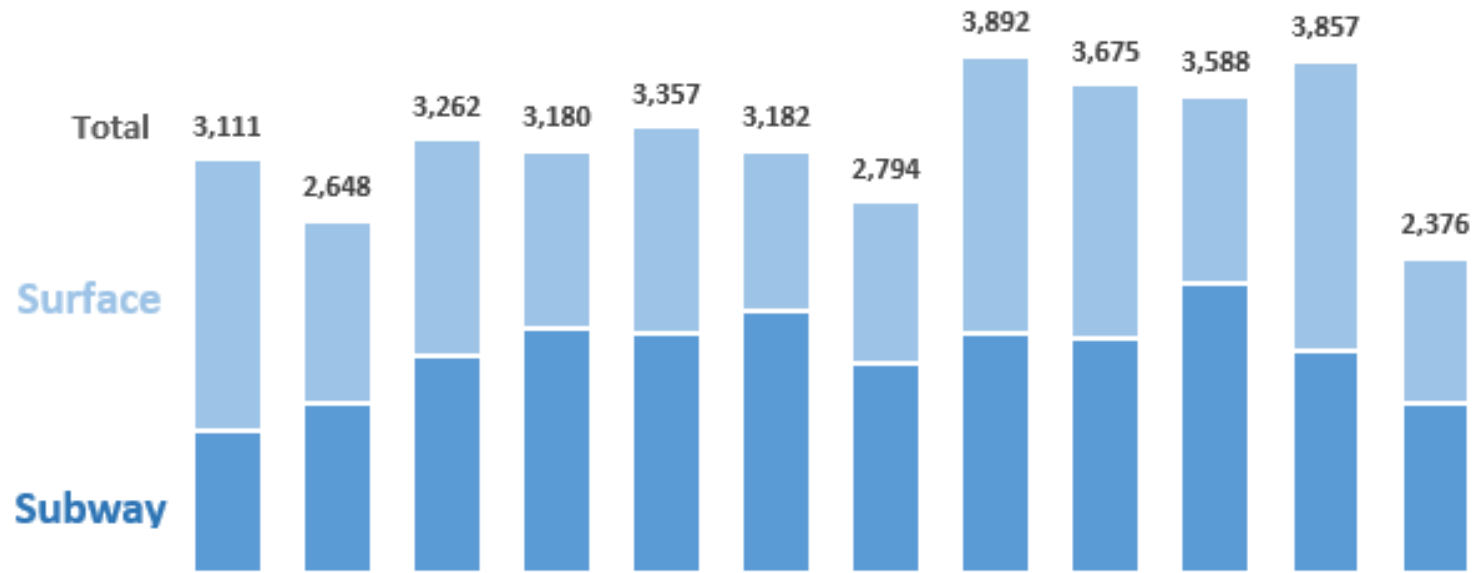
Changes due to COVID-19

- **In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to preserve the survey effort, maintain consistent HOPE sampling methodology, and protect the safety of clients, outreach teams, and community alike, NYC made several procedural adjustments to the survey process, including:**
  - Canvassing led by outreach provider staff and select DSS/DHS staff over 4 nights (vs. volunteers on 1 night); outreach teams, who have experience engaging unsheltered individuals as part of the City's ongoing, year-round, 24/7 outreach, only surveyed individuals deemed likely to be unsheltered (vs. everyone).
  - Canvassing took place earlier (10pm-1am vs. 12:15am-4am) due to 1am subway closure.
  - We were unable to conduct a Shadow Count and instead used prior years' Shadow count data in our final estimation.
- **Additionally, other factors related to pandemic response in New York may have impacted the number of unsheltered homeless persons surveyed on the streets/subways, including:**
  - The MTA shutdown the subways from 1am to 5am. In response, the City developed and implemented extensive, expanded efforts to engage individuals on the subways during the closure period, especially at End of Line stations. Through these efforts, outreach teams helped hundreds of individuals accept and access shelter services.
  - The City also dramatically expanded resources dedicated to serving and supporting New Yorkers who've lived unsheltered: since HOPE 2020, NYC has opened more than 1,300 specialized beds to help these formerly unsheltered individuals get back on their feet.
  - The City also implemented the life-saving strategy of relocating thousands of DHS Single Adult shelter system clients from congregate shelters to commercial hotels to promote social distancing and reduce the risk of COVID-19. As a result, outreach teams were also able to offer this shelter option to unsheltered individuals they engaged, as well as the option of stabilization beds established in commercial hotels. Between HOPE 2020 and HOPE 2021, the Single Adults shelter census increased by roughly 1,400.

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→ ***As a result of these adjustments made in response to the pandemic, comparing to prior years' estimates is not exactly apples to apples.***
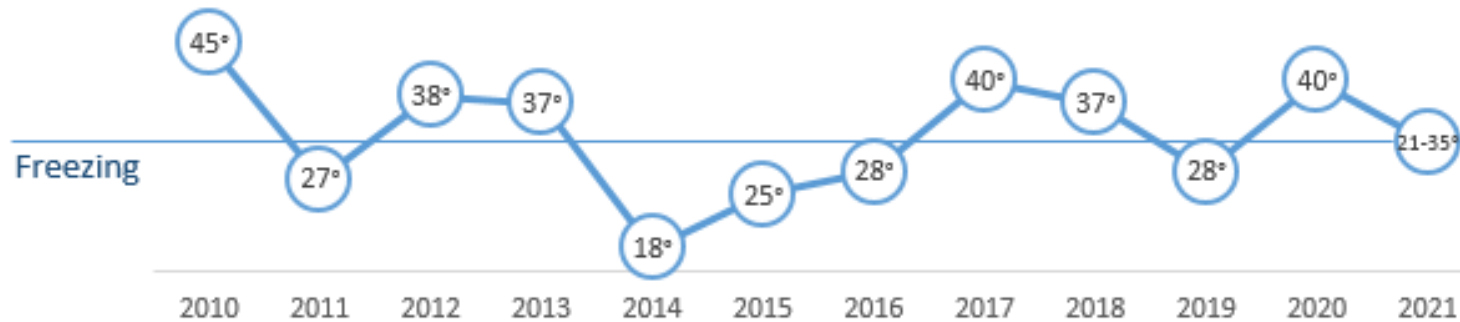
Key Findings

- Total estimate of **2,376 unsheltered individuals on January 26th, 2021**.

  - This is a 38% decrease compared to January 2020.

  - Estimates decreased across all boroughs, ranging from -16% in Staten Island to -71% in Brooklyn, and decreased -23% in the subway.
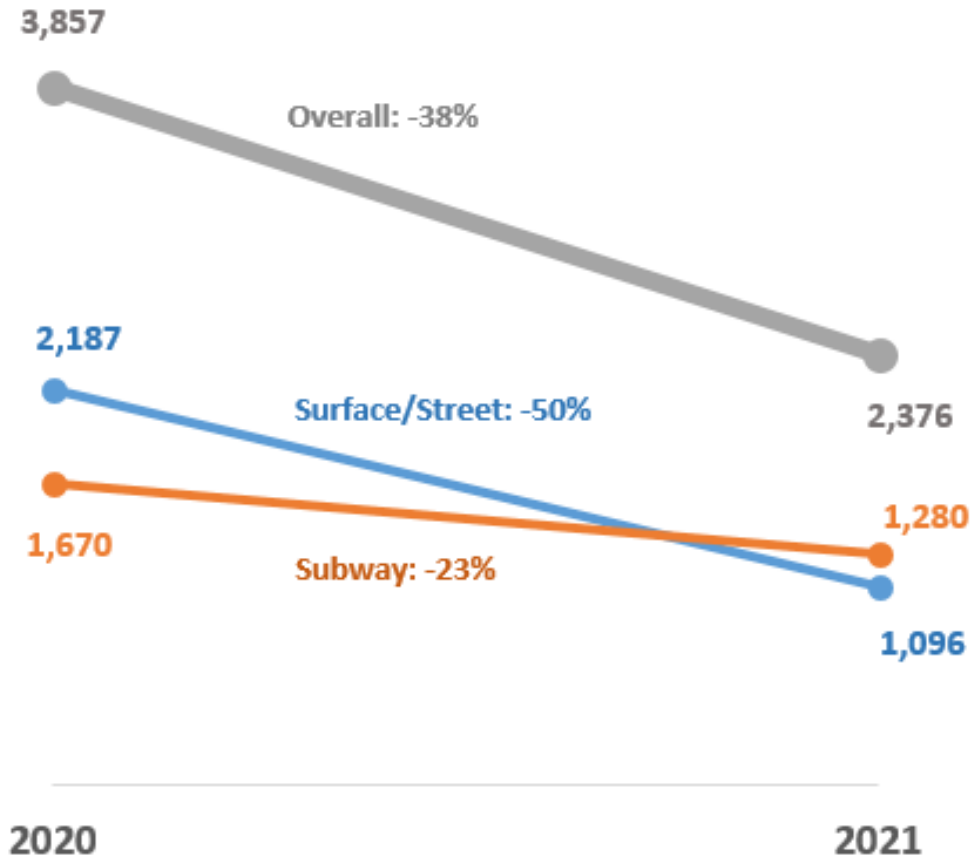
HOPE Estimates, 2010-2021

Change in HOPE Estimates, 2020-2021

Change in NYC Unsheltered Homelessness

3,857
Overall: -38%
2,376

2,187
Surface/Street: -50%
1,096

1,670
Subway: -23%
1,280

2020   2021

Change in NYC *Surface/Street* Unsheltered Homelessness by Borough

1,283
Manhattan: -45%
700

Brooklyn: -71%
400
145
117
88
46

Bronx: -37%
231
218
Queens: -60%
55
Staten Island: -16%

2020   2021