



# State of the Homeless 2020

Homelessness in Arizona Annual Department of Economic Security Report

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Homelessness in Arizona Annual Report

Michael Wisheart, Director

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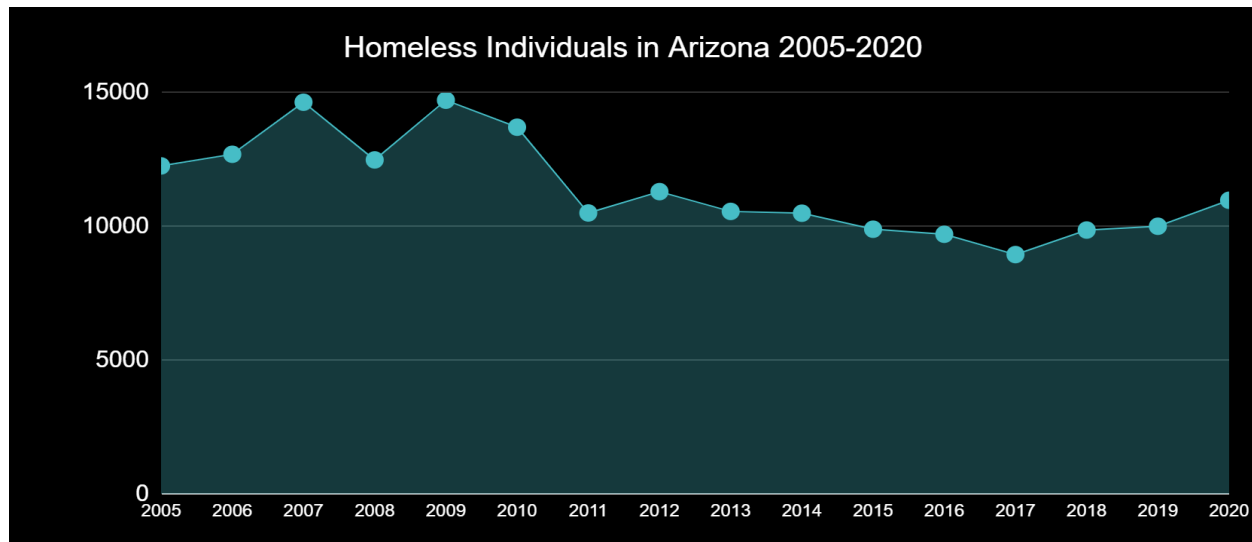
Arizona Department of Economic Security

Prepared by:

## Executive Summary

Arizona, like much of the country, is continuing work to prevent and mitigate homelessness in both rural and urban communities. While the factors that lead to homelessness are varied and complex, there are many consistent and identifiable contributing factors for both individuals and families in urban and rural communities. For individuals, conditions such as physical and behavioral health issues, domestic violence, and substance abuse contribute to homelessness. On the community side, there are not enough affordable homes to house everyone in need. Diverse strategies, approaches, and coordination are necessary to assist individuals experiencing homelessness. The community benefited from the advent of Rapid Rehousing in 2009. There was a steep decline in people experiencing homelessness when that intervention became available. While the trend has not returned to the previous levels, homelessness rates are increasing, indicating continued work and interventions are needed, and our work is not done.

*Figure 1; is showing the last 15 of homelessness in each Continuum of Care (COC) and the total of statewide data. In 2009, Rapid Rehousing became a new intervention. In 2009/2010, the chart shows a steep decline in people experiencing homelessness.*



In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2020, the Department of Economic Security (DES) Homeless Coordination Office provided over 12,547 at-risk and individuals experiencing homelessness with services and/or interventions, through contracted vendors. DES has contracted homeless interventions in ten of the fifteen counties throughout Arizona and strives to provide homeless services to every area in need.

The massive impact of COVID-19 has significantly impacted the homeless population. Homeless communities typically tend to be communal living styles. There is less access to quality health care and low ability to socially distance, making it the ideal breeding ground for illness and disease. At the time of this report, COVID-19 is still in full force, the full effect yet to be known.



The Annual Report on Homelessness in Arizona has been prepared pursuant to A.R.S. § 41-1954 (A) (19) (g) and provides information about homelessness in Arizona during SFY 2020. This report endeavors to show trends, successes, population, demographic characteristics, and subgroups that the homeless population is composed of in the state of Arizona. It also shows the similarities and differences in the issues that impact homelessness in the three Continuums of Care (COCs).

In Arizona, the state's homeless services are divided into three service areas which are referred to as COCs. Arizona's three COCs are; Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care which encompasses all of Maricopa County, Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH) encompassing Pima County, and the Balance of State (BOS) covering the remaining thirteen (13) counties of the state.

Information and data for this report are derived from the following sources:

- Annual Point-In-Time (PIT) surveys, conducted January 28, 2020;
- The state's three COC's aggregate reports from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); and
- Contract reports submitted to the DES Homeless Coordination Office.

All references to SFY 2020 refer to the time frame of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

## Statewide Data

In Arizona, homeless service providers and funding agencies utilize Wellsky software for their HMIS data to manage and store data on individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Homeless service providers enter data into HMIS which is then compiled into reports of aggregate data to be reviewed by planning committees, funding agencies, and the United States (U.S.) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Homeless service providers and funding agencies use the homeless data to adjust services to meet the needs of the homeless within each community.

HUD further analyzes HMIS information to adjust federal funding to fill service gaps in communities nationwide and compiles the data to provide nationwide reports and statistics on homelessness in the U.S.

*Table 1 illustrates the estimated Arizona Census population in 2018 for each continuum and the 2020 HMIS estimated total number of individuals that are homeless in each continuum.*

| Continua              | Census Population | PIT # Homeless | % of Population |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Maricopa Regional COC | 4,485,414         | 7,419          | 0.16%           |
| Balance of State      | 1,746,024         | 2,236          | 0.12%           |
| TPCH                  | 1,047,279         | 1,324          | 0.12%           |
| Totals                | 7,278,717         | 10,979         | 0.15%           |

## PIT Count

The PIT count is intended to be an unduplicated count of homeless individuals and families, both sheltered and unsheltered, on one night, every January. The count is conducted to acquire an estimated number of individuals that are homeless at a point in time in each community. PIT counts are conducted by homeless programs across the U.S. After the results are calculated, HUD requires the COCs to send the results to HUD for review.

*Figure 2 depicts Sheltered PIT totals from the three continuums over a three-year period.*

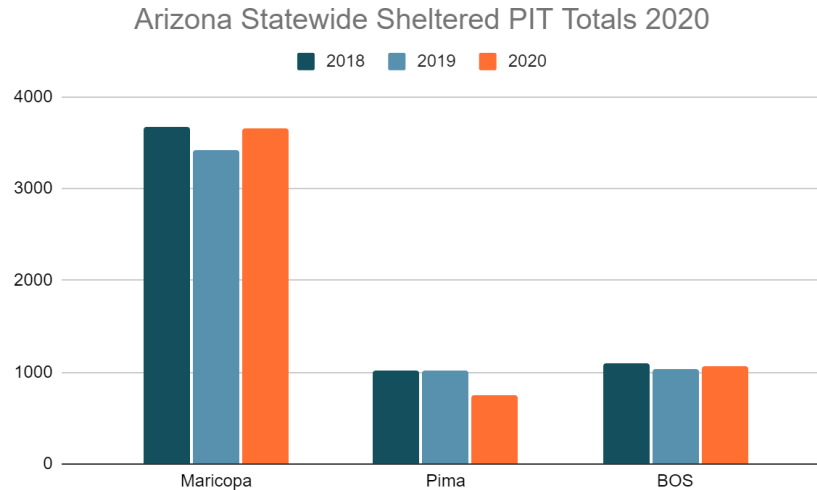
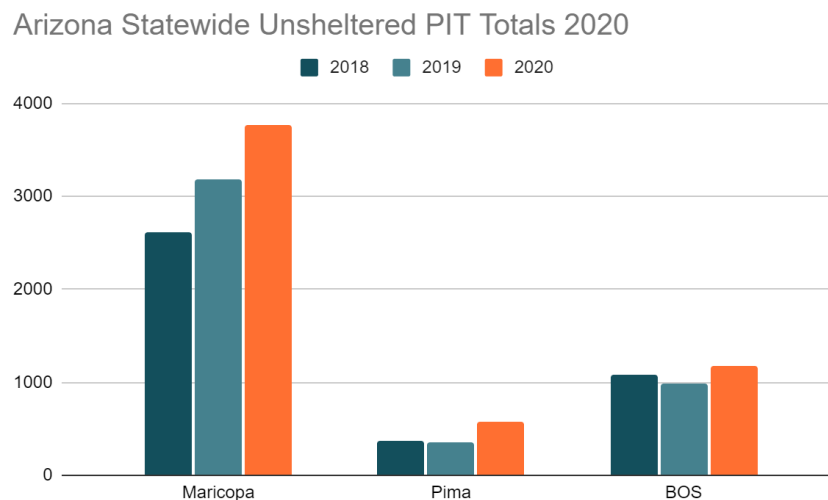


Figure 2A depicts Unsheltered PIT totals from the three continuums over a three-year period.

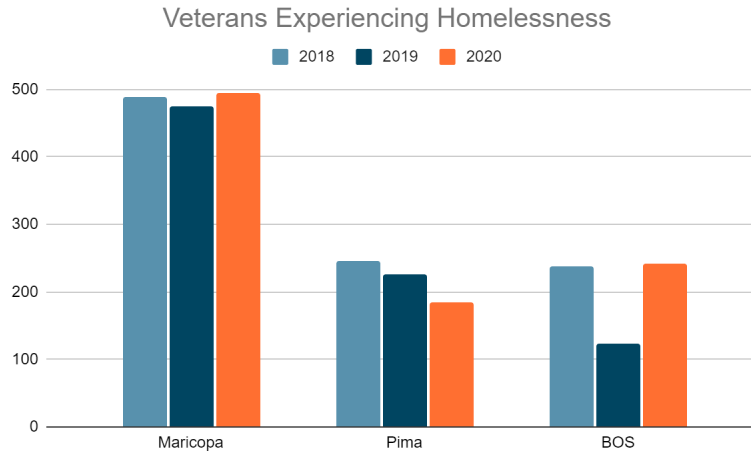


## Veteran PIT Estimates

During the annual PIT count in 2020, there were 921 veterans identified as experiencing homelessness statewide. Over the last three years, the number of veterans in TPCB and BOS has decreased. The number of veterans in Maricopa County increased slightly over the three-year period. The decrease in homeless veterans may be a result of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) funding awarded to Arizona service providers as well as the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher program administered by several public housing agencies.

Both the SSVF and VASH program funding allow agencies to assist veterans with housing placement and case management services. Arizona communities, through collaborative efforts, have demonstrated that ending veteran homelessness is possible. Ending veteran homelessness or reaching functional zero does not mean that veterans will no longer experience homelessness. Reaching functional zero for veterans means that when a veteran has a housing crisis, our communities have the systems and resources in place to immediately identify and support the veteran to end their homelessness.

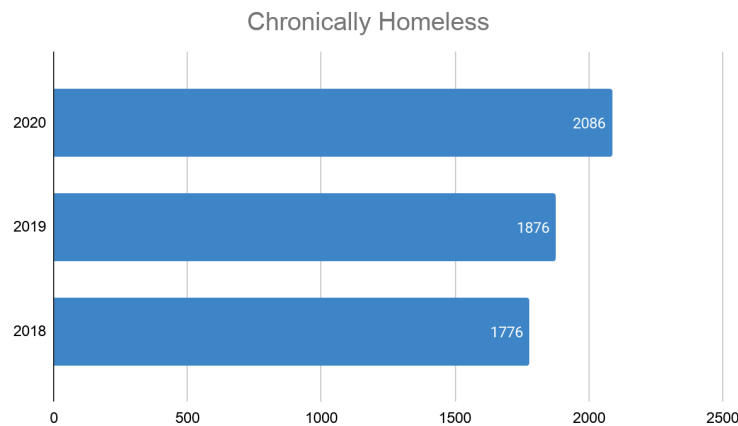
Figure 2B illustrates the number of homeless veterans in each continuum over the course of three years.



### Chronic Homelessness

Chronic homelessness is defined as individuals or families that have experienced homelessness more than four times in the past three years or have been homeless for one continuous year or longer. The trend in households meeting the definition of chronically homeless has been increasing over time, indicating that more wrap-around services are needed to not only help an individual get housed but also learn the skills and gain the confidence to remain in their homes.

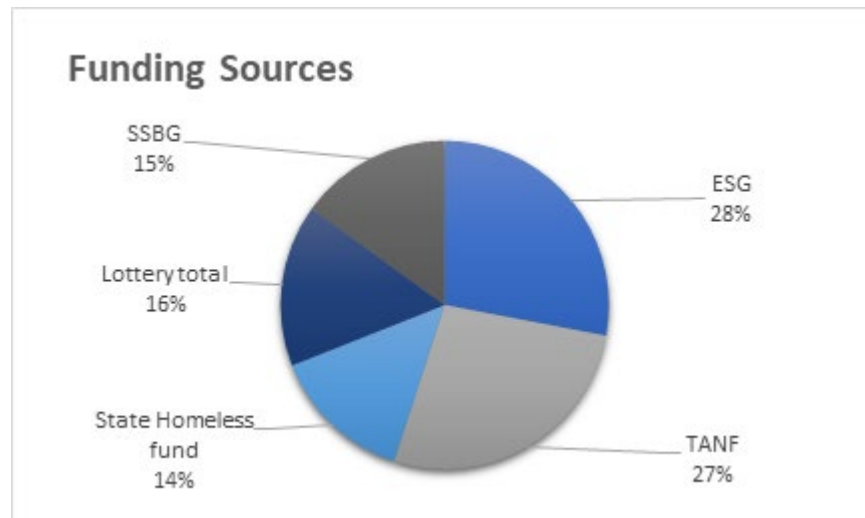
Figure 3 displays the increase in the number of chronically homeless individuals during the PIT count statewide over a three-year period.



### Funding

The DES Homeless Coordination Office utilizes federal and state dollars to fund homeless services statewide. The federal funding sources include the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Social Services Block Grant, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The state funding sources include the Arizona State Lottery and General Fund.

Figure 4 shows the division of the DES statewide funding allocation; total budget \$6,105,817.00.



## Coordinated Entry and Housing First

In 2020, HUD requires federally funded homeless programs to utilize a coordinated entry process. The coordinated entry process helps communities prioritize homeless assistance based on vulnerability and severity of service needs to ensure that people who need assistance the most receive it in a timely manner.

The coordinated entry process is intended to ensure that all people experiencing homelessness have fair and equal access to needed and available resources. They are to be quickly identified, assessed for, referred and connected to, housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs. All ESG-funded agencies participate in coordinated entry and receive referrals utilizing all of their resources to provide Temporary Emergency Shelter (TES), Permanent Supportive Housing, and Rapid Rehousing (RRH) to stabilize households and end their homelessness.

Housing First is an evidence-based approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness. Permanent housing, a safe place to lay one's head each night, is a basic but essential need. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, shelter, and other basics (such as; air, food, water, etc.) are among the most urgent and basic physiological requirements. These needs must be met before they can pursue and make lasting changes, or reach any other goals.

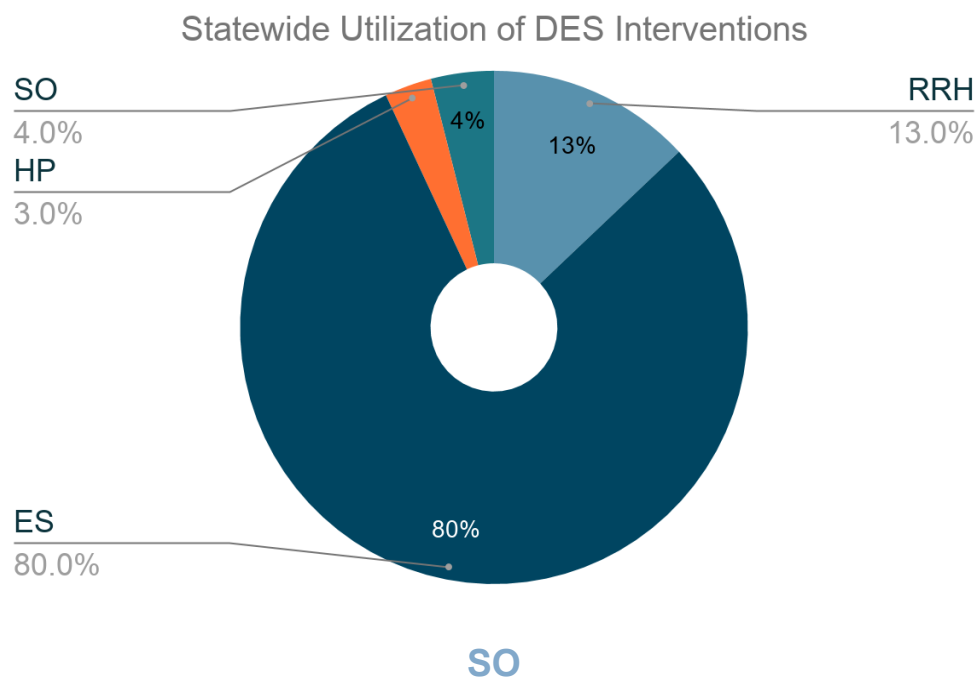
DES-contracted homeless service providers operate under the Housing First philosophy. Once the individuals or families are safely housed, the provider will work with them and utilize community resources to provide wrap-around services and support. It is at this point, that both physical and emotional wellness will be fully pursued. The providers will work with these individuals and families in obtaining stability, by addressing and attempting to remove any barriers that have prevented them from living stable, self-sufficient, and fulfilling lives.

## Interventions and Placements

The four homeless interventions available through DES Contracts to assist individuals are:

- Street Outreach (SO): SO is an intervention that involves homeless service providers going out into the community to meet with homeless individuals where they reside to provide resources.
- Homeless Prevention (HP): HP is an intervention that provides rental assistance and case management to prevent individuals from becoming homeless.
- Emergency Shelter (ES): ES Programs provide sleeping accommodations, case management, meals, and supportive wrap-around services designed to assist individuals and families.
- Rapid Rehousing (RRH): RRH Programs provide case management and financial assistance to participants to cover deposits, utilities, and rent to stabilize participants into permanent housing.

Figure 5 depicts the percentage of utilization for RRH, ES, and HP contracted interventions during SFY 2020.



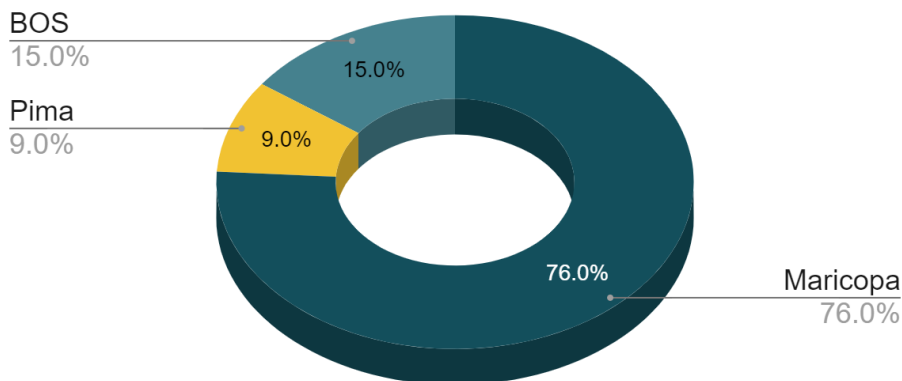
SO is an important intervention that pursues and attempts to engage individuals who may be disconnected or alienated from mainstream services and are living on the streets or in encampments. Some individuals who live on the street, rather than a shelter, do so by choice, and others lack the knowledge or awareness of the services available to them.

### ES

ES is a temporary intervention to provide a safe place for an individual or family to lay their head each night while permanent housing is secured. ES may include TES, or hotel or motel vouchers when an ES is unavailable. During SFY 2020, the DES contracted ES providers served 10,374 individuals statewide.

Figure 6 depicts the total number served in emergency shelters for DES contracted providers in each continuum during SFY 2020.

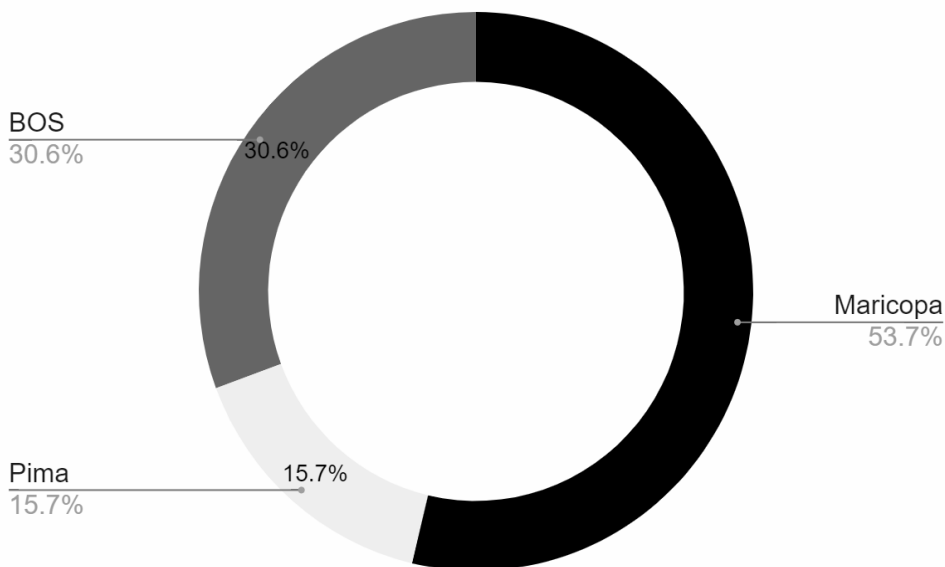
Statewide DES Contracted Emergency Shelter SFY 2020



RRH

RRH places a priority on moving families and individuals experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible. Typically, this is within 30 days of entering the program. RRH is a hand up for individuals and families that need assistance to regain their footing. This is a temporary intervention that lasts from three to 24 months, based on that individual's need and situation. The rent is paid up to 100 percent but then gradually steps down as the individual is able to pay the rent in its entirety.

Figure 7 illustrates the number of DES contracted RRH placements statewide for SFY 2020.



HP



HP is an expedited intervention that assists individuals and families that are at imminent risk of losing their current housing and becoming homeless. Once an individual or family becomes homeless, the challenges and barriers they face to becoming stably housed again increase exponentially. HP funding can alleviate those burdens by keeping them in their current home. The program provides a variety of assistance options that include short-term rental assistance, rental or utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and crisis case management.

## Special Initiatives

### Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined by HUD as a permanent dwelling that a household can obtain for 30 percent or less of its annual income (that percentage varies slightly by city). Expending anything over the 30 percent standard creates instability as households are then sometimes unable to afford other necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. In Arizona and across the nation, there is a severe lack of affordable housing. An estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households spend more than 50 percent of their annual incomes on housing. The chasm this creates plays a significant role in the ever-increasing evictions and foreclosures throughout the state of Arizona and nationwide. The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) places Arizona as the 20th highest housing wage in the U.S. In 2020, working at a minimum wage of \$12.00 an hour, an employee would need to work 57 hours to afford a one-bedroom at Fair Market rent. According to the NLIHC report, renters in Arizona need to earn an hourly wage of \$21.10 to afford a modest two-bedroom housing unit (NLIHC). In Arizona, DES works collaboratively with the Department of Housing which focuses on the creation and or construction on affordable housing.

### Vulnerable and At-Risk Seniors in Arizona

In Arizona, homeless data illustrates an increase in the number of seniors among the homeless population. In the early 1990s, only 11 percent of the adult homeless population was aged 50 and over. That increased to 37 percent by 2003. Today, half of those who experience homelessness are over age 50. While this population has safety-net programs available to them, i.e., subsidized housing, Medicare, and Social Security benefits, they become vulnerable to losing their home due to financial setbacks such as rent increases and unexpected medical bills. With rising housing costs, elderly households often must choose between housing and other basic needs such as food and medical care.

In SFY 2020, the Arizona Attorney General's (AG) Office earmarked \$59,554 to fund community-based solutions that assist people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. DES, with the collaborative efforts of two agencies; Cornerstone and Community Action Human Resources Agency, received funding from the AG's Office to provide Senior HP services. The program provides a variety of assistance that includes short-term rental assistance, rental or utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and crisis case management.

Through this grant opportunity, DES will provide additional HP services to seniors living in rural Arizona, allowing these residents to remain safely in their homes. The DES Homeless Coordination Office looks forward to continued work with our valued agency partners to serve seniors in Apache, La Paz, Mohave, Navajo, and Pinal Counties.

### Arizona StandDown Alliance

The StandDown is an annual, one to three-day event that provides resources for homeless veterans or veterans at risk of becoming homeless. The Maricopa County StandDown, which is the largest StandDown event in Arizona, served 2,212 veterans in 2020. StandDown events are held annually in the following counties:

- Cochise
- Graham
- Maricopa
- Coconino
- Greenlee
- Mohave

- Navajo
- Pima
- Pinal
- Yavapai
- Yuma

## Global Pandemic Response

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the federal government passed and signed into law on March 17, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to assist communities nationwide related to housing, economic, and other needs. DES received \$22.2 million of these funds to help the providers around the state to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the community needing and utilizing homeless assistance.

The first allocation of funds focused on HP and ES around the state; the providers that were funded were having to abide by social distancing measures, cutting their capacity in half in most cases, and isolating those that were vulnerable, sick, or experiencing symptoms in hotels and motels to keep everyone safe and well. HP is also highly needed to assist the many people that are losing their jobs or working fewer hours due to the pandemic and are at risk of being unable to afford their current housing.

The second allocation of funds will be utilized largely for Rapid Rehousing, a service to permanently house people experiencing homelessness. The state anticipates an influx of people needing to be housed in the coming months as eviction moratoriums come to an end, and will be prepared to get and keep people off the streets and out of shelters.

With this additional CARES Act funding, representing an increase of nearly four times the amount typically received, DES' goal is to make lasting changes and significant impacts in the homeless community toward drastically and permanently reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness.

## Resources

Arizona Housing Coalition- Maricopa Veterans StandDown 2020

[https://www.azhousingcoalition.org/uploads/1/2/4/9/124924903/2020\\_maricopa\\_county\\_standdown\\_report.pdf](https://www.azhousingcoalition.org/uploads/1/2/4/9/124924903/2020_maricopa_county_standdown_report.pdf)

Balance of State PIT results:

<https://housing.az.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/2020%20PIT%20Summary.pdf>

Dennis P. Cullhane, Stephan Metraux, and Jay Bainbridge. "The Age Structure of Contemporary Homelessness: Risk Period or Cohort Effect?" Penn School of Social Policy and Practice Working Paper (2010): 1-28.

Maricopa 2020 PIT results:

<https://www.azmag.gov/Programs/Homelessness/Point-In-Time-Homeless-Count>

National Low income Housing Coalition, Out of Reach 2020: Arizona

<https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/arizona>

Pima 2020 PIT results:

<https://tpch.net/data/hic-pit/>

Photograph (Cover page)  
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United States Census Bureau, Maricopa County, Pima County and State of Arizona population estimates: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/pimacountyarizona,maricopacountyarizona,AZ/PST045219>