

Measuring Doubled-Up Homelessness & Implications for Equitable Homelessness Response

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National Alliance to End Homelessness #NAEH2022



Outline:

1. Brief background.
2. Describe the development of a measure to estimate doubled up homelessness in the total population.
3. Present highlights from national analyses.
4. Discuss program/policy implications.

Article: Richard, Dworkin, Rule, Farooqui, Glendening, & Carlson. (2022). **Quantifying Doubled-Up Homelessness: Presenting a New Measure Using U.S. Census Microdata.** *Housing Policy Debate*.

In the U.S., homelessness is defined as

Overall Federal

“Lacking a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence”

HUD’s Official

People staying in a shelter/transitional housing program (**sheltered homelessness**).
People staying in a place “not meant for human habitation” (**unsheltered homelessness**)

“literal homelessness”

Dept of Education

Same as HUD... but also:

Those “who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason”—

“doubled-up homelessness”

Doubling up matters, but research is limited

- Because it doesn't meet HUD's definition of homelessness, people in doubled-up situations are **not included in total homelessness counts**.
- Qualitative research shows **doubling up is often inadequate**: characterized by stress, uncertainty, lack of legal rights, poor education and health, & risk for literal homelessness (e.g., Wright et al., 1998; Bush & Shinn, 2017; Cusack & Montgomery, 2019; Skobba & Goetz, 2015)
- **COVID-19** heightened concerns; behind on rent, but more likely to avoid congregate shelters and stay in crowded housing, with implications for spread (Benfer et al., 2021).
- Despite risks, methods to measure **"hidden homelessness"** have been mostly limited to school data (leaving out families with preschool age children and individual adults; inconsistent data collection).

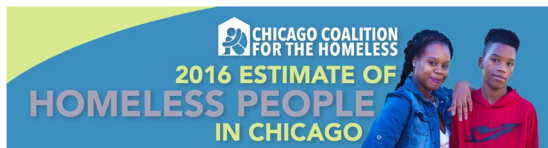
How we define and measure homelessness has implications for **racial equity**:

- **Indigenous homelessness** in rural tribal areas and cities more often manifests as doubling up and overcrowding than street & sheltered homelessness (Pindus et al., 2017; Levy et al., 2017).
- HUD methods may undercount **Hispanic/Latinx homelessness** because it excludes doubling up, which may be more likely due to **barriers to shelter**: concerns about family separation, lack of Spanish-speaking programs, and misinformation about shelter eligibility for immigrants (Baker, 1996; Conroy & Heer, 2003; Chinchilla & Gabrielian, 2019; Culhane et al., 2019).
- Focus groups in 2020 with **Pacific Islander** communities (to inform service response to the pandemic) discussed how affordable housing is not designed for multigenerational families and contributes to tenuous doubling up (e.g., people are not formally on the lease, overcrowding) (NIS, 2020).

Developing a new measure

Chicago

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless began exploring how to estimate doubled up homelessness using Census Bureau data.



Nashville

Nashville researchers/CoC members wanted to do the same.

Doubling Up
in Nashville-Davidson County

Molly K. Richard
Gracie Rule
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Peabody College at Vanderbilt University



National!

Aim: to agree on a shared method and make it replicable and easy for others to use.

Method - Data



- **American Community Survey (ACS):**
 - ~1 in 100 nationally representative sample
 - **“Rolling” average** where portions of sample are taken each month of the year
 - “Public Use Microdata” (individual records)
 - Allows for estimates for states, all metropolitan areas, many cities and counties, and comprehensive via PUMAS (Public Use Micro Areas), which represent ~100,000 people.

Method - Definition

- **Who is likely to be doubling up due to economic hardship?**
 - **Relationships** to household head
 - Individual and household both under 125% of geographically adjusted **poverty level**
 - In some cases, **overcrowding**
- **We asked experts & built on existing work:**
 - **HUD & US Census** studies that examined doubling up across all income levels after the Great Recession. (Eggers & Moumen, 201; Mykyta & Macartney 2011)
 - **NAEH** State of Homelessness estimates of people doubling up, at risk of literal homelessness
 - **Chicago families** with experience of doubled up homelessness
 - **Nashville Homeless Planning Council** members

Table 1. Household Members Considered Doubled Up, if Poor or Near Poor

Adult children and children in-law <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Who have children of their own, who are married, or who are single but living in an overcrowded (more than two people per bedroom) situation.
Grandchildren <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Minor and adult grandchildren, excluding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor grandchildren of the household head when the household head claims responsibility for their needs (asked directly by the ACS).• Minor grandchildren whose single parent is living at home and is under 18 (i.e., children of teenage dependents).
Other relatives <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Parents/parents-in-law, siblings/siblings-in-law, cousins, aunts/uncles, and other unspecified relatives of the household head who are under the age of 65, <i>excluding</i>:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor siblings of the household head when the minor’s parent is not present (so that the household head may assume responsibility for minor siblings).• Single and childless adult siblings of the household head, when the household head is also single with no children—resembling a roommate situation.▪ Parents/parents-in-law, siblings/siblings-in-law, cousins, aunts/uncles, and other unspecified relatives of the household head who are over age 65 and in an overcrowded situation.
Non-relatives <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Individuals unrelated to the householder, including friends, visitors, and “other” non-relatives, <i>excluding</i>: An unmarried partner or their children, roommates/housemates, and roomers/boarders.

Table 1. Household

Adult children <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ W situation	Most important things to note is that we included:	er bedroom)
Grandchildren <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ M	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relatives who aren't the legal responsibility of a household head, or who research shows tend not to share housing except for under stressful economic conditions.	ectly by the
Other relatives <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pa the age▪ Pa age 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-relatives who do not formally contribute to the household costs ("visitors" but not "roommates")• For gray areas (single adult children and relatives over 65) we only included them if they were overcrowded.	o are under responsibility sembling a ho are over
Non-relatives <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Inc		
or their children, roommates/housemates, and roomers/boarders.		

1) How **many** people experience doubled-up homelessness in the US?

1) How are **demographic & geographic** characteristics similar to and different from “literal homelessness”?



3.7 Million People (1.2%)

Were experiencing
doubled up homelessness
in 2019, on average

More than **6x** the number of
unsheltered and sheltered
homelessness identified in
HUD PIT counts

Findings highlight: Rural and Tribal Areas

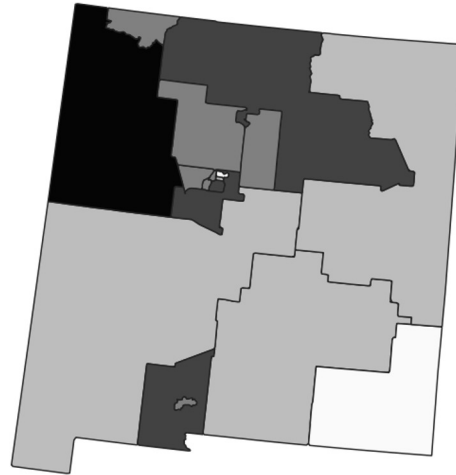
- With HUD's estimates, most rural areas are aggregated up to large jurisdictions, even whole states, but an ACS doubled-up measures can examine smaller levels of geography (public use micro-area, PUMAs).
- **Some rural areas have low rates of “literal” homelessness but high rates of doubling up.**
- For example, we can learn about areas that are home to reservations:
 - **South Dakota's doubling-up rate (0.8%) is less than national rate, but the Lakota Region has a very high (4.7%) rate.**

New Mexico has lower than average “literal” homelessness and only two HUD CoCs, “Balance of State” and Albuquerque.

The average state doubling up rate is 2%.

But, in the Navajo Nation PUMA, the rate is nearly 7% of all individuals.

**Doubled up
homelessness 2019,
ACS, by PUMA**



**Sheltered &
unsheltered
homelessness 2019,
HUD, by CoC**



Findings Highlight: Race and Ethnicity

- Race and ethnicity were significantly associated with doubling up. Among racial groups, people who were **Black, Indigenous, and “other” race** had highest rates, *like* data on “literal” homelessness.
- However, doubling up was significantly higher among **Hispanic/Latinx** individuals compared to Non-Hispanic individuals, a trend *not* seen in sheltered & unsheltered homelessness rates.
- There are higher doubling up rates among **Asian American, especially “Other Asian” and Pacific Islanders**, than White individuals – *not* the case among “literal” homelessness.

Potential Implications. What are your thoughts?

- Should we use local doubled-up **estimates** to supplement annual sheltered & unsheltered homeless counts?
- Should homeless service **eligibility** to be more inclusive of doubling up?
- This research can supports the need for more **inclusive shelter policies** – language, gender, allowing families to be together; education about rights to shelter/services for undocumented/mixed doc families.
 - *And more non-congregate shelter, motel/SRO; short-term, and long-term rental assistance.*
- And of course, **upstream prevention**:
 - Universal housing vouchers so that all families have access (Hispanic/Latinx families are currently underrepresented among voucher participants, Acevedo-Garcia, 2014).
 - Other (many needed) methods to expand affordable housing.
 - Primary prevention resources when needed

Thank you!

Article: Richard, Dworkin, Rule, Farooqui, Glendening,
& Carlson. (2022). **Quantifying Doubled-Up
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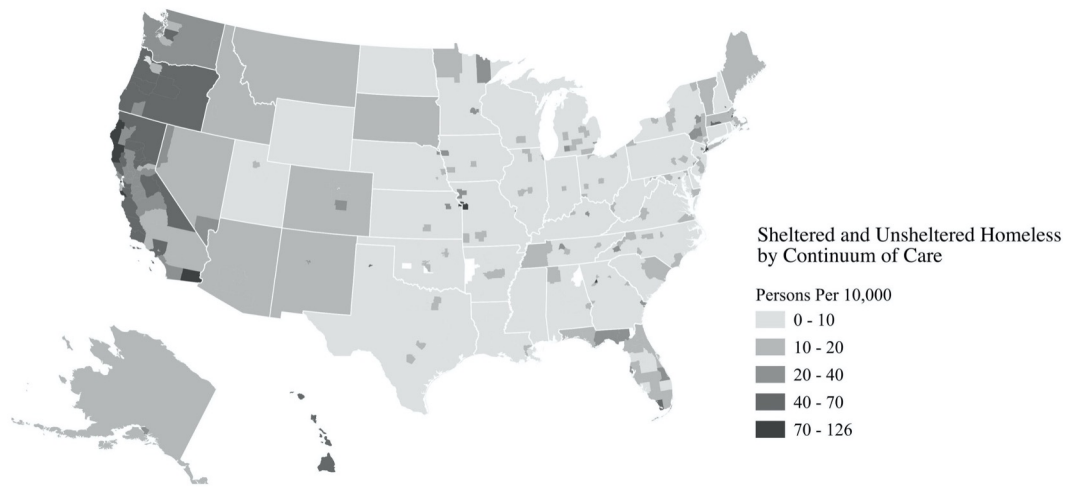
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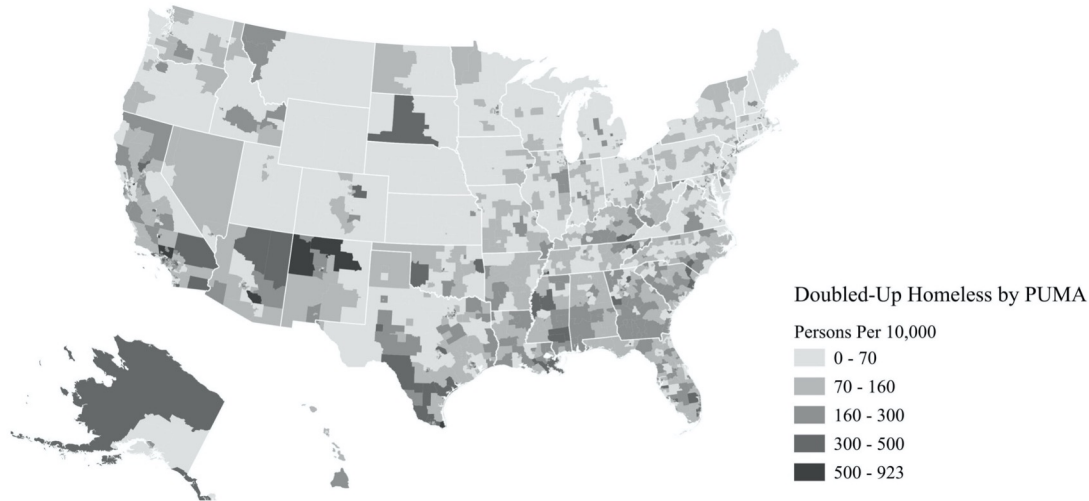
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***The following
slides are extra,
for reference by
app users and in
Q&A***



Continuum of Care: HUD
jurisdictions for federal funding & data collection



PUMA: Public Use Micro Area
Smallest census regions for public use data sets (~100,000 people)

Table 2. Rates of Doubled-Up Homelessness Across Racial and Ethnic Groups

	All Individuals		Individuals at or below 125% adjusted poverty	
	Percent doubled up	Margin of Error for Percent	Percent doubled up	Margin of Error for Percent
Hispanic/Latinx	2.40	+/-0.07	10.49	+/-0.17
Non-Hispanic	0.88	+/-0.02	7.02	+/-0.10
AI/AN	3.03	+/-0.26	12.34	+/-0.98
Other race	2.96	+/-0.19	11.67	+/-0.63
Black	2.19	+/-0.08	9.05	+/-0.29
Two/more races	1.39	+/-0.12	7.62	+/-0.61
AAPI	1.19	+/-0.08	8.71	+/-0.51
White	0.82	+/-0.02	7.00	+/-0.17

Table 3. Race and Ethnicity of People Experiencing Literal and Doubled-Up Homelessness

	Total population	Literally Homeless (PIT)	Doubled-Up Homeless (ACS)
Hispanic/Latinx	18.5%	21.5%	38.3%
Not Hispanic/Latinx	81.5%	78.5%	61.7%
AI/AN	0.9%	3.2%	2.2%
Other race	5.0%	--	12.7%
Asian (HUD) /Chinese & Japanese (ACS)	1.5%	1.3%	1.5%
Black	12.6%	39.8%	23.7%
Pacific Islander (HUD)/ “Other Asian and Pacific Islander” (ACS)	4.3%	1.6%	4.4%
Two/more races	3.5%	6.5%	4.2%
White	72.3%	47.7%	51.1%

Limitations

- Renters may avoid reporting additional household members for fear of being evicted if housing more people than a lease allows, and Census data tends to **underestimate** marginalized groups in general.
- Limitations to **reliability** when using ACS 1-year data to study annual change for small areas and subpopulations. For better **margins of error** in on small areas and subpopulations, ACS 5-year data is more appropriate, though less useful in monitoring annual trends.

Discussion: Structure vs. agency and the role of cultural preferences

When Baker (1996) first described the Latino paradox in homelessness and pointed to doubling up among Hispanic/Latinx families as a cultural adaptation to poverty, she also stated:

“Such alternatives of necessity are no substitute for housing subsidies, tax and wage policies that bolster working-class earnings, or aggressive antidiscrimination policies that open up new sectors of the labor and housing markets still closed on the basis of race” (p. 140).

Cultural preferences and adaptations matter, but programs and policies must examine how their designs or levels of funding contribute to disparities, especially as long as doubling up is associated with overcrowding and negative outcomes.