Santa Monica Homeless Count: 2026 Results and Every Year Since 2020

Updated October 28, 2026. Every phone number was checked against an official page.

718 people were counted experiencing homelessness in Santa Monica on the night of Thursday, January 22, 2026. 389 were outdoors, 222 were in shelter, 59 were in occupied vehicles and 48 were in tents or makeshift shelters. Those four numbers add up to exactly 718.

That is 94 fewer people than in 2025 (down 11.6%), and 86 fewer people outdoors (down 18.1%). Below is every year since 2020, with the source for each number.

How many homeless people are in Santa Monica in 2026?

The 2026 point-in-time count found 718 people experiencing homelessness in Santa Monica on January 22, 2026, according to the City of Santa Monica's July 24, 2026 release. A point-in-time count is a snapshot of one night, so the number of different people who experience homelessness in the city over a full year is higher.

Where the 718 were on January 22, 2026

Where	People
Outdoors (streets, beach, parks)	389
In shelter	222
In occupied vehicles	59
In tents or makeshift shelters	48
Total	**718**

Is 718 the number that matters?

Not by itself. The count is one night in January, done by volunteers walking the streets, and it is the number everyone argues about. The number that matters is every day: every neighbor who steps around someone in crisis on the way to work, every parent who changes the walk to school, every shop owner who opens the door to a camp, and every one of the people on that list who is suffering, often too sick to ask for help. A count can fall while that daily reality stays the same.

That is why our plan asks for numbers that measure what happens every day, published monthly: beds offered and accepted, holds that end in a bed, people who got treatment, and what each program costs and delivers. Where every figure on this page comes from is listed under Sources below; the 2026 numbers are from the City of Santa Monica's release of July 24, 2026, based on the LAHSA count.

Is homelessness going down in Santa Monica?

Yes, by the last two counts. The total fell from 812 in 2025 to 718 in 2026, and people outdoors fell from 475 to 389. People in shelter rose from 202 to 222, and occupied vehicles fell from 84 to 59.

The City's headline said people outdoors fell 18.7%, but 86 out of 475 is 18.1%, which is the figure in the body of the same release. We use 18.1%.

A falling count does not mean the hardest cases are getting help. People too sick to accept a bed are the ones most likely to still be outside, which is why treatment and a 24/7 crisis drop-off are at the center of our plan.

Santa Monica homeless count by year, 2020 to 2026

Year	Total	Outdoors	Sheltered	Vehicles, tents and makeshift	Coun by
2020	907	n/a	n/a	n/a	City
2021	We found no published count for 2021.				
2022	807	608*	199	*included in outdoors	City
2023	826**	n/a	n/a	n/a	LAHSA figure
2024	774	479	173	122 (61 vehicles, 21 tents, 40 makeshift)	LAHSA
2025	812	475	202	135 (84 vehicles, 20 tents, 31 makeshift)	LAHSA
2026	718	389	222	107 (59 vehicles, 48 tents and makeshift)	LAHSA

* The City's 2022 release reported 608 unsheltered including people in vehicles and makeshift dwellings.

** The City ran its own 2023 count and reported 926; LAHSA's figure for Santa Monica was 826.

Each row reconciles: 2024 is 479 + 173 + 122 = 774, 2025 is 475 + 202 + 135 = 812, and 2026 is 389 + 222 + 107 = 718.

Why do sheltered and unsheltered not add up to 718?

Because the City reports people in vehicles and in tents or makeshift shelters as their own categories. In 2026, 389 people outdoors plus 222 in shelter is 611. The other 107 were 59 people in occupied vehicles and 48 in tents or makeshift shelters. Many news stories report the first two numbers only, which leaves 107 people unexplained.

Can you compare City-run counts with LAHSA counts?

Not directly. Santa Monica ran its own count through 2023, and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) took over in 2024. Methods changed, so the 2020 to 2023 numbers and the 2024 to 2026 numbers are not strictly comparable. The clearest trend is within the LAHSA years: 774, then 812, then 718.

When is the homeless count done, and can I volunteer?

The count is done on a few nights each January across Los Angeles County. In 2026, Santa Monica and the rest of West Los Angeles were counted on Thursday, January 22. Volunteers sign up through LAHSA in the fall; watch lahsa.org for the next count.

What do the numbers leave out?

The count measures how many people are homeless on one night. It does not measure how many were offered a bed and said yes, how many were too sick to choose, how many hold evaluations ended in a bed, or what each program cost and delivered. Those are the numbers our open books initiative asks the City to publish every month, as totals, never names.

Sources

1. City of Santa Monica: Unsheltered homelessness in Santa Monica falls (July 24, 2026)
2. City of Santa Monica: 2025 point-in-time count data (July 23, 2025)
3. City of Santa Monica: 2024 homeless count results (June 28, 2024)
4. City of Santa Monica: 2022 homeless count results (May 5, 2022)
5. Santa Monica Daily Press: volunteers wanted for the annual homeless count

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