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Homelessness in the Mountain West

Yanneli Llamas

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, yanneli.llamas@unlv.edu

Caitlin J. Saladino

The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West, caitlin.saladino@unlv.edu

William E. Brown Jr.

Brookings Mountain West, william.brown@unlv.edu

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HOMELESSNESS IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

Demography Fact Sheet No. 8 | June 2020

Prepared by: Yanneli Llamas, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

This Fact Sheet provides data on homelessness in the five Mountain West states: Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. This information is adapted from the original U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness data, as reported in the Psy.D. Programs’ article, “The Places with the Most (and Least) Homelessness in America.”¹

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Over the past ten years, the number of homeless individuals in the United States has decreased. However, homeless populations tend to be concentrated in urban areas, especially those with high cost of living.²
2. Within the Mountain West, Nevada has the most homeless individuals per capita: 232.7 homeless for every 100,000 residents in the state.
3. When compared to other Mountain West states, Utah has a larger share of females (39.6%) and youth (20.2%) in its homeless population.
4. Nationwide, Nevada is the state with the smallest share of both females (29.2%) and youth (9.2%) in its homeless population.

Table 1 presents data on select U.S. states in the Mountain West. It shows the per capita homeless population for each of these states. That is, the data show how many individuals are homeless out of every 100,000 individuals living in the state. The rank is a number from 1-51, as the states as well as the District of Columbia are ranked from the highest per capita homeless (1) to the lowest per capita homeless (51). Of the states observed in this fact sheet, Nevada has the highest number of per capita homeless, and the ninth highest number in the country. Of the Mountain West states, Utah has the lowest homeless population per capita, ranking at 37th nationwide.

Table 1:
HOMELESS PER 100,000 PEOPLE IN MOUNTAIN WEST STATES (2019)

Rank	State	Homeless per capita
9	Nevada	232.7
11	Colorado	167.0
13	New Mexico	154.6
15	Arizona	137.5
37	Utah	87.3

*Adapted from original data source: Steele, A. (2020, March 2). The Places with the Most (and Least) Homelessness in America.

¹ Steele, A. (2020, March 2). The Places with the Most (and Least) Homelessness in America. <https://psycdprograms.org/the-places-with-the-most-and-least-homelessness-in-america/>

² Ibid.

Table 2 shows the percent of the homeless population in each state that is female, using the same ranking system as Table 1. Of the Mountain West states, Utah has the highest share of females in its homeless population. Nevada has the lowest percent of females in its homeless population nationwide.

Table 2: HOMELESS FEMALES AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL HOMELESS PER STATE (2019)

Rank	State	Percent % Female
25	Utah	39.6
26	New Mexico	39.4
37	Arizona	36.8
46	Colorado	33.7
51	Nevada	29.2

*Adapted from original data source: Steele, A. (2020, March 2). The Places with the Most (and Least) Homelessness in America.

Table 3 shows the percentage of youth—here defined as individuals under the age of 18—that make up each state’s homeless population. The states are then ranked from 1-51, as in Table 1 and Table 2. Of the Mountain West states, Utah has the highest youth share of the homeless population at 20.2%. This means that 1 out of 5 individuals within the homeless population of Utah is underage. Nevada has the smallest percent of youth homeless population, not only for the states listed here but nationwide.

Table 3: HOMELESS YOUTH AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL HOMELESS PER STATE (2019)

Rank	State	Percent % Youth
20	Utah	20.2
38	Arizona	16.0
39	New Mexico	15.9
42	Colorado	15.2
51	Nevada	9.2

*Adapted from original data source: Steele, A. (2020, March 2). The Places with the Most (and Least) Homelessness in America.