

FACT SHEET



THE HIGH COST OF HOMELESSNESS TO SARASOTA

The Florida Council on Homelessness' June 2019 Annual Report notes that homelessness significantly increases community costs borne by taxpayers and state and local governments in terms of emergency response teams, crisis stabilization units, uninsured emergency medical care and law enforcement involvement. Further, the presence of street homelessness impacts businesses by reducing foot traffic, tourism, downtown redevelopment, public perception and property values. There also is the 'opportunity lost' cost associated with the inability of homeless persons to meet their full potential while trying to survive on the streets. Chronic homelessness, in particular, results in especially high community costs.

- 25% of the homeless population in the United States suffers from some form of severe mental illness. In comparison, only 4% of US adults have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness.

- *US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2015 assessment*

- "For long-term, chronically homeless individuals, including repeated incarcerations, emergency room use and inpatient hospitalizations," Florida residents pay \$31,065 per chronically homeless person every year, as opposed to paying only \$10,051 per homeless person to provide permanent supportive housing and services such as job training and health care."

- *2014 study by the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness*

- “The total number of homeless persons in Sarasota and Manatee counties officially counted and reported to HUD was 1,044 in 2020. Of the homeless persons officially counted, 188 were chronically homeless, 155 were severely mentally ill, 135 struggled with substance abuse, 105 were veterans, seven were persons with HIV/AIDS, 92 were victims of domestic violence, 63 were unaccompanied youth and 23 were parenting youth or children of parenting youth.”

- *City of Sarasota Five-Year Consolidated Plan 2021-2025*

- “There is a crisis of unsheltered homelessness among adults in and near downtown Sarasota and in camps scattered throughout the area. These individuals, who comprise only a small segment of the total homeless population, have the greatest impact on the local community. The group is highly visible, affects the community’s quality of life, results in high community costs and has a negative economic impact on businesses.”

- *Sarasota: Creating an Effective Homeless Crisis Response System, Florida Housing Coalition, 2017*

- “City of Sarasota Commissioners voted unanimously to develop a 'sit lie' ordinance to stop people from sitting or lying on city sidewalks. The move comes after several business owners in the downtown area complained about aggressive panhandling and homeless people camping near their businesses.”

- *Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Oct. 7, 2021*

- “Five to 10 percent of Sarasota’s adult homeless are in jail at any given time. Although less than half of one percent of the general population, the homeless accounted for 16 percent of Sarasota arrests between 2004 and 2010.”

- *Judge Erika Quartermaine, presider for Sarasota County’s Mental Health and Comprehensive Treatment Courts*

- “In 2015, 56 homeless individuals had 10 or more visits to Sarasota Memorial Hospital’s emergency room. Combined, those 56 individuals had a total of 981 ER visits. That came with an average cost of \$1,358 per visit, and \$23,796 per individual.”

- *Former Sarasota City Manager Tom Barwin*

- “Nearly 15,000 Sarasota County families live just a paycheck away from homelessness.”

- *Former Sarasota Herald-Tribune Columnist Carrie Seidman*