

Invisible Homelessness – Quick Facts (2025)

The Reality



- Over 70% of families experiencing homelessness are hidden, staying in motels, cars, or doubled-up housing.
- Family homelessness rose 39% nationally from 2023 to 2024.
- Nearly 150,000 children experienced homelessness during the 2024 count.

Why Families Stay Hidden

- Fear of child-welfare involvement or stigma.
- Eligibility rules that require families to “prove suffering” to access help.
- Safety concerns in shelters or fear of retraumatization.

Invisibility is an adaptive survival strategy — but it comes at a deep emotional cost.

Consequences of Invisibility



Families lose access to services when HUD definitions exclude them.



Children experience higher developmental risks.



Systems overspend on crisis instead of prevention.

What Helps

1. Expand definitions of homelessness to include all unstably housed families.
2. Invest in trauma-responsive early learning and guaranteed income.
3. Build prevention systems, not crisis-only responses.
4. Center lived experience in policy design.

