



Deaths Among People Experiencing Homelessness (PEH) 2025

Prepared by the Public Health Department

This fact sheet provides information about deaths among people experiencing homelessness (PEH) in our community, highlighting key causes of death and trends. By using this data, communities can support targeted interventions to reduce preventable deaths and improve outcomes for this population.

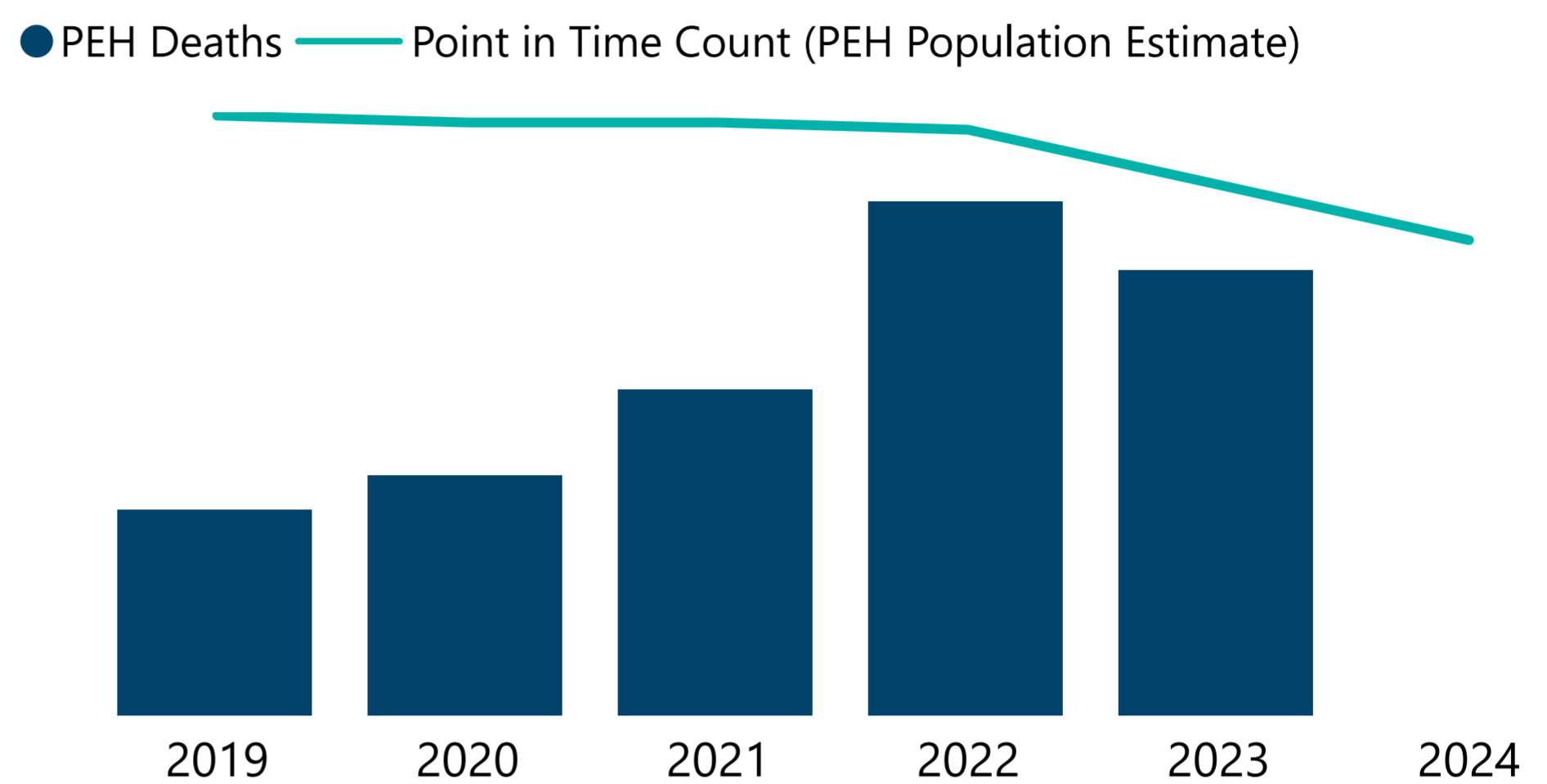


This summary uses death certificate data to identify deaths among PEH. Although this is an authoritative source on causes of deaths, a decedent's housing or shelter status is not always documented.

Local officials began to more systematically document homelessness on death certificates in 2020 and an optional checkbox for homelessness was added to California death certificates in 2022. These changes have resulted in more complete data, but the certificates still rely on next of kin, death investigators, funeral home staff, and/or physicians to report the decedent's housing status.

This summary is not expected to correctly identify all deaths among PEH. Due to the noted limitations, counts are not presented and the *findings should be interpreted with caution.*

Point in Time Count and Deaths among PEH, San Luis Obispo County



*Deaths and population are shown on separate axes with different scales. The axes have been removed due to limitations in the source data.

Between 2019 and 2023, there have been approximately 150 documented deaths among PEH. Deaths appear to have peaked in 2022, which was the first year that a homelessness field was available on death certificates. It is likely that the observed increase is due to heightened awareness and documentation and not a true increase in deaths. Additionally, the most recent Point in Time count suggests that the PEH population has decreased since 2022.

Drug-related causes of death are the most common cause of death. Drug and alcohol-related causes of death combined account for nearly half of deaths. Chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer account for approximately 20% of deaths. Transport incidents account for less than 10% of deaths.

Most decedents were 45-64 years old, non-Hispanic white, or male. A relatively large proportion had no known race/ethnicity documented, which may be due to a lack of available demographics for PEH decedents.

Demographics of Deaths among PEH, San Luis Obispo County, 2019-2023

Category	Percent
Age Group	
25-44 years	29%
45-64 years	45%
65+ years	26%
Race/Ethnicity	
Non-Hispanic White	71%
Hispanic	11%
Non-Hispanic Other	5%
Unknown	13%
Sex	
Female	19%
Male	81%

Leading Causes of Death among PEH, San Luis Obispo County, 2019-2023

