



Summary of key findings

Official statistical definition of homelessness (Table 1.DEU)

According to the [Wohnungslosenberichterstattungsgesetz](#), Germany legally defines homelessness as people without a rental or tenancy agreement for a flat (and no property rights), or for whom a flat is not available for other reasons.

Latest national estimates of homelessness (Table 2.DEU)

- 262 600 individuals, representing 0.31% of the total population (2022)
- 37% are women, 63% are men
- Point-in-time count, based on the Homeless Reporting Act homelessness report
- ETHOS Light groups included:
 - ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces
 - ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters)
 - ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women's refuges)
 - ETHOS 4: People in institutions
 - ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents)
 - ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing)

Legal framework to collect data on homelessness (Table 3.DEU)

The [Wohnungslosenberichterstattungsgesetz](#) governs data collection on homelessness in Germany. The legislation mandates the data collection of sheltered homelessness at the federal level as well as the regular assessment of potential improvements to the method to measure people experiencing homelessness to address measurement gaps.

National homelessness strategy (Table 4.DEU)

The [National Action Plan Against Homelessness](#), "Together for a home," approved in April 2024

Approaches to collect data on homelessness (Table 5.DEU)

- Annual reporting of people sleeping in shelters for the homeless: Annual point-in-time count of all people staying in nationally registered shelters (Table 5.1.DEU)
- Biennial survey to count 1) people sleeping rough and 2) people staying with family/ friends: A survey of clients of a range of service providers that have been identified as likely to provide support to people experiencing homelessness (Table 5.2.DEU)



Table 1.DEU. Official statistical definition of homelessness

Homelessness	<p>A person is considered homeless when: According to the law that became effective in April 2020 [Wohnungslosenberichterstattungsgesetz (§3)], a person is considered homeless when there is no rental or tenancy agreement for a flat (and no property rights); a flat is not available for other reasons.</p> <p>The following situations are counted in data collection efforts described in Table 2.DEU: staying in accommodation/shelter by care system; staying in homes, asylums, institutions or women's houses because they lack a flat; living in cheap motels; staying with friends/family; and/or living in the street (rough sleepers).</p>
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Table 2.DEU. Data on people experiencing homelessness

National data, presented according to [ETHOS Light Typology](#)

Headline estimate of homelessness (Individuals)	% of total population	ETHOS 1 People living rough	ETHOS 2 People in emergency accommodation	ETHOS 3 People in accommodation for the homeless	ETHOS 4 People living in institutions	ETHOS 5 People living in unconventional dwellings	ETHOS 6 People staying with family/friends
262 600 63% men 37% women	0.31%	38 500 ^(a)	178 100	Included in ETHOS 2	Not included	Included in ETHOS 1	54 800 ^(b)

Type of count: Point-in-time Flow

Year: 2022

Included in headline estimate: Children (<18)

Temporary accommodation for: Asylum seekers Refugees Victims/survivors of domestic violence

Note: Data refer to data collected from the annual reporting of people sleeping in shelters for the homeless and the Biennial survey to count 1) people sleeping rough and 2) people staying with family/friends. The sum of all ETHOS categories is larger than the headline estimate due to an estimate of 8 800 double entries. (a) This number includes the totality of adults (37 400) and children living rough (1 100). (b) This number includes the totality of adults (49 300) and the number of children living rough (5 500).

Source: OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing (QuASH), 2023; Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS), Homeless Reporting Act homelessness report.

Table 3.DEU. Legal framework to collect data on homelessness

Law that governs data collection on homelessness	Wohnungslosenberichterstattungsgesetz
Legal obligations	The law mandates data collection (of sheltered homelessness only) at the federal level. The law also mandates that the government must regularly assess how measurement of people experiencing homelessness can be improved and address measurement gaps.

Table 4.DEU. National homelessness strategy

National homelessness strategy in place	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: National Action Plan Against Homelessness , "Together for a home" <input type="checkbox"/> No, but regional and/or local strategies exist <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Table 5. DEU. Approaches to collect data on homelessness

5.1.DEU. Annual reporting of people sleeping in shelters for the homeless	
Description	
<p>The Federal Statistical Office has the mandate to conduct an annual point-in-time count of all people staying in nationally registered shelters on 31 January. Shelter providers report into a centralised system the number of shelter users on that day each year.</p>	
<p>Type of count generated</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Point-in-time</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Flow (period)</p>	<p>Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service-based method
<p>Lead authority(ies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Statistical Office 	<p>Source(s) of information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers
<p>Scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National 	<p>Depth of Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data disaggregated by (age, sex, nationality, duration of homelessness, etc.)
<p>Frequency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual 	
<p>ETHOS Light groups included</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women’s refuges)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 4: People in institutions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing)</p> <p>Note: Each ETHOS Light group includes one or more sub-categories of living situations. ETHOS Light groups are considered as “included” in the data collection approach if at least one of the sub-categories is counted.</p>	



5.2. DEU. Biennial survey to count 1) people sleeping rough and 2) people staying with family/friends

Description

A research institute appointed by the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building conducts a survey of clients of a range of service providers that have been identified as likely to provide support to people experiencing homelessness (e.g., food banks, health clinics, youth centres, job centres, drop in-centres, women’s support services). The approach relies on multiple methods: *administrative data* are used to contact potential service providers to the homeless population at the municipal level; a *stratified geographic count* (a variation of a street count) is used to determine the geographic areas that should be covered in the survey; and *service-based methods* are used to collect data from researchers conducting interviews/surveys with individuals experiencing homelessness.

<p>Type of count generated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Point-in-time <input type="checkbox"/> Flow (period) 	<p>Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative data • A stratified geographic count (a variation of a street count) • Service-based method
<p>Lead authority(ies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building • A research institute 	<p>Source(s) of information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individuals experiencing homelessness are the direct source of data.
<p>Scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National scope: 1) random representative sample of rural and urban municipalities; 2) the likelihood of a municipality’s inclusion in the sample increases with population size 	<p>Depth of data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data are disaggregated by sociodemographic characteristics
<p>Frequency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biennial 	

ETHOS Light groups included

- ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces
- ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters)
- ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women’s refuges)
- ETHOS 4: People in institutions
- ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents)
- ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing)

Note: Each ETHOS Light group includes one or more sub-categories of living situations. ETHOS Light groups are considered as “included” in the data collection approach if at least one of the sub-categories is counted.