Summary of key findings

Official statistical definition of homelessness (Table 1.COL)

Homelessness is defined as: individuals without a distinction of sex, race, or age that make the street their dwelling place, either permanently or transitorily.

Latest national estimates of homelessness (Table 2.COL)

- 34 091 individuals, representing 0.07% of the total population (2017-2021)
- 10% are women, 90% are men
- Point-in-time count, based on the Census of Street Dwellers
- 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.COL)

Law 1641 of 2013 gives the National Administrative Department of Statistics the mandate to carry out the Census of Street Dwellers, which intends to obtain demographic, social, economic data of people experiencing homelessness in prioritized municipalities, until all municipalities that have people experiencing homelessness in Colombia are reached.

National homelessness strategy (Table 4.COL)

Public Social Policy for Street Dwellers

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

- Census of Street Dwellers: Enumeration and survey of people experiencing homelessness implemented over five years (Table 5.1.COL)

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Table 1.COL. Official statistical definition of homelessness

Homelessness	Law 1641 of 2013, which serves as a framework to structure public policy initiatives that target people experiencing homelessness defines individuals experiencing homelessness as: ''individuals without a distinction of sex, race, or age that make the street their dwelling place, either permanently or transitorily''.

Table 2.COL. 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
34 091 90% men 10% women	0.07%	Included in headline estimate but not specified	Included in headline estimate but not specified	Included in headline estimate but not specified	Included in headline estimate but not specified	Included in headline estimate but not specified	Not included

Type of count: Point-in-time ☒ Flow ☐   Year: 2017-2021
Included in headline estimate: Children (<18) ☒
Temporary accommodation for: Asylum seekers ☒ Refugees ☒ Victims/survivors of domestic violence ☒

Note: The headline estimate refers to four censuses carried out in 2017 (Bogotá), 2019 (other big cities), 2020 (small municipalities), and 2021 (intermediate size cities). The sum of data from all four censuses provides the number of people experiencing homelessness in the territory of Colombia over the 2017-2021 period. If disaggregated, in 2017, 9 538 individuals experiencing homelessness were counted in Bogotá, in 2019 13 252 were counted in other big cities, in 2020, 5 043 individuals in small municipalities and in 2021, 6 248 individuals in intermediate-sized cities.
Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (2021), Census of Street Dwellers

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

Law that governs data collection on homelessness	Law 1641 of 2013
Legal obligations	Law 1641 of 2013 gives the National Administrative Department of Statistics the mandate to carry out the Census of Street Dwellers, which intends to obtain demographic, social, economic data of people experiencing homelessness in prioritized municipalities, until all municipalities that have people experiencing homelessness in Colombia are reached.

Table 4.COL. National Homelessness strategy

National homelessness strategy in place	☒ Yes: Public Social Policy for Street Dwellers ☐ No, but regional and/or local strategies exist ☐ No

Table 5.COL. Approaches to collect data on homelessness

5.1.COL. Census of Street Dwellers (2017-2021)

Description

The Census of Street Dwellers seeks to retrieve updated data on the volume and the main socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of street dwellers in the totality of the Colombian territory. The census was carried out in four cohorts sequentially. Bogotá was covered in 2017, other big cities were covered in 2019 (a total of 21 cities), small municipalities were covered in 2020, (a total of 654 small municipalities), and intermediate-sized cities were covered in 2021 (a total of 444 intermediate-sized cities). The census also incorporates a survey that seeks to determine the sociodemographic characteristics of people experiencing homelessness.

Type of count generated	Methods
☒ Point-in-time ☐ Flow (period)	• Street count

Lead authority(ies)	Source(s) of information
• National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE)	• The individuals experiencing homelessness are the direct source of data as they are surveyed directly.

Scope	Depth of data
• National scope, data divided by cohorts: Bogotá, other big cities, small municipalities, and intermediate-size cities.	• Data disaggregated by (sex, age, ethnicity, reason for experiencing homelessness, migrant status, time spent in the street, etc).

Frequency	
• The census began in 2017 and it was progressively implemented in a five-year span	

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.

Notes

Methodological note - Census of Street Dwellers

Last Stage 2021_Census Report