

# **Sacramento County 2022 Mid-Year Homeless Deaths Report**

January 1, 2022 – July 31, 2022

**93 homeless deaths**

**1,599 homeless deaths from 1/1/2002 – 7/31/2022  
or 1 person every 5 days for the past 20 years  
& 1 person every 2 days in mid-year 2022**



***Día de Los Muertos - "Day of the Dead" - Altar, Loaves & Fishes, 2013***

***December, 2022***



# Dedication

*In memory of all our unhoused neighbors  
who have died in our community*



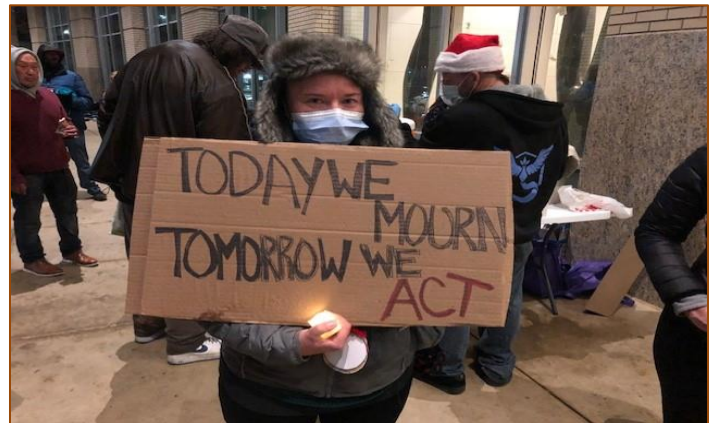
The Coroner documented 93 deaths of people experiencing homelessness [closed cases] in the first six months of 2022

We continue to hope that this publication not only provides a proper and dignified memorial to their death, most in an untimely manner, but provides a catalyst for change fueling the political and community will to find comprehensive solutions to end homelessness in our community and prevent the tragic deaths of our unhoused neighbors.

SRCEH will hold our 9th Annual Interfaith Homeless Memorial Candlelight Vigil at City Hall  
December 21, 2022 - 7 pm to 8 pm

*National Homeless Memorial Day – on or around December 21 annually - sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless, National Health Care for the Homeless Council and the National Consumer Advisory Board*

*December 21 is the longest and darkest night of the year. December 22 begins the march towards a new year, spring and the hope that we can take action to end the senseless and untimely deaths of our unhoused neighbors*



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# 2022 MID-YEAR HOMELESS DEATHS REPORT

## PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN SACRAMENTO



**93**

homeless deaths in  
the first half of 2022

**1,599**

homeless deaths over  
the past 20 years

**49.5%**

of 2022 homeless  
deaths were people  
of color

**79.5%**

of 2022 homeless deaths were men;  
20.5% were women.

**48.7%**

were related to substance abuse,  
78% involved methamphetamines.

**26%**

were related to violence: 75% blunt  
trauma, 12.5% guns, 8.3% stabbings.



To read the 2022 full report, visit us at  
[WWW.SRECH.ORG](http://WWW.SRECH.ORG)

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### FINDINGS:

**Number of Coroner reported homeless deaths:** There were **93** Coroner reported deaths [closed cases] of people experiencing homelessness from January 2022 – July 31, 2022. The total from 2002 to mid-year 2022 is **1,599 homeless deaths, or roughly one homeless person's death every 5 days over a 20-year period, and one homeless person's deaths every 1.8 days in mid-year 2022.**

#### Demographics:

- **Gender:** 79.5% were male and 20.5% were female;
- **Age:** the average age for women was 48.3 and 48.3 for men;
- **Number of lost years due to untimely deaths:** Using 76 years of age as the life expectancy national average, overall, the lives of the homeless people were cut short on average by 25%
- **Ethnicity:** 50.5% of the homeless deaths were Caucasian with homeless people of color [Black; Asian; Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander and Multi-Ethnic] comprising just under half [49.5%] of the homeless deaths;
- **Ethnicity & Gender:** 55.6% of the female deaths were women of color, disproportionately multi-ethnic; while 44.3% of homeless men were people of color, disproportionately black;
- **Location of death:** 53.4% were outside; 29.5% in a hospital; 11.4% in a vehicle; 3.4% died in a motel; 2.3% passed away at a friend's home;
- **Seasonal distribution of deaths:** Winter was the deadliest months in mid-2022 with 36.6% of homeless deaths in January and February, 2022;

#### Manner and Cause[s] of death:

- **Manner of death:** 65.9% were accidents, while only 13.6% died of natural causes; 6.8% homicides; 4.5% suicides; and 9% undetermined
  - **Gender:** the manner of death for homeless women and men was very similar with the exception of natural deaths, homicides and suicides: only 1.7% of homeless women died natural deaths compared to 12.6% for homeless men. Additionally, homicides for homeless men was 5 times higher than homeless women [5.7% and 1.1% respectively], while all the suicides were men;
  - **Ethnicity:** 50.5% of deaths by accident were white, and 49.5% were people of color – Deaths by natural causes for white homeless people [58.3%] was 7 times higher than that of Asian and Hispanic homeless people and twice that of Black homeless people; 67% of the homicides were of homeless people of color
- **Major Underlying Cause[s] of death:** Substance use disorder deaths were the leading cause of death in mid-2022 [48.7%] followed by violent death [25.8%], and cardiovascular disease [9.7%]; death from COVID-19 accounted for 2.3% of the total homeless deaths in mid-2022;
- **Substance use disorder Deaths and Gender and Ethnicity:**
  - **Gender:** Overall the percentage of homeless women and men dying from violence and substance use disorders were fairly similar; however, all deaths from cardiovascular disease were men;
  - **Ethnicity:** of all Multi-Ethnic homeless people who died – 58.3% died of substance use disorders; 60.4% of all Black homeless people died of substance use disorders; 58.3% of Hispanic homeless people and 50.5% of White homeless people died of substance use disorders.
- **Meth homeless deaths:** 77.8% of all Alcohol and Other Drugs [AOD] homeless deaths in mid-2022 involved meth;
- **Violent deaths:** 26% of all homeless deaths in mid-2022 were violent deaths -- 75% of violent deaths were blunt force injuries, followed by gunshot wounds [12.5%], stabbings [8.3%]; and hangings [4.2%]

## II. FINDINGS

**93 Homeless Deaths: 1/1/2022 – 7/31/2022**  
**1 death every 5 days for 20 years and**  
**1 death every 2 days in the first half of 2022**

There were **93** Coroner reported deaths of homeless people [closed cases] from January 1, 2021 to July 31, 2021, for a total of **1,599 deaths from 2002 to mid-year 2022**. See Table 1 below for the number of deaths by year and Figure 1 for a year-by-year graph.

**Table 1: Number of Homeless Deaths by Year: 2002 to Mid-Year 2022**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Deaths</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>1/1/22-7/31/22</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,599</b>

### Comparison to Homeless 2022 Mid-Year Deaths to 2021 Mid-Year Deaths

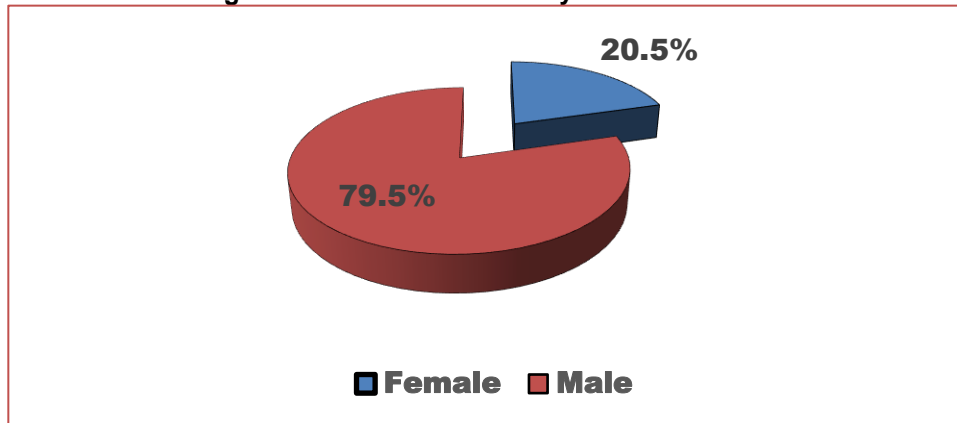
By contrast to 93 mid-year homeless deaths in 2022, there were 113 mid-year homeless deaths in 2021, and 199 overall in 2021.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Gender

Overwhelmingly the percentage of homeless deaths were male, 74 homeless men, or 79.5%, while there were 19 homeless female deaths, or 20.5% [Figure 1]. These percentages are consistent with past homeless deaths reports.

Figure 1: Homeless deaths by Gender: Mid-2022



### Age

Figure 2 shows the age range of the homeless deaths by age category by gender. Overall, homeless women died at an earlier age than homeless men, with about 40% dying between the ages of 30-39. This 2022 mid-year report is the first time that more women 60+ years old died than homeless men.

Figure 2: Homeless Deaths by Age Category and Gender: Mid-2022

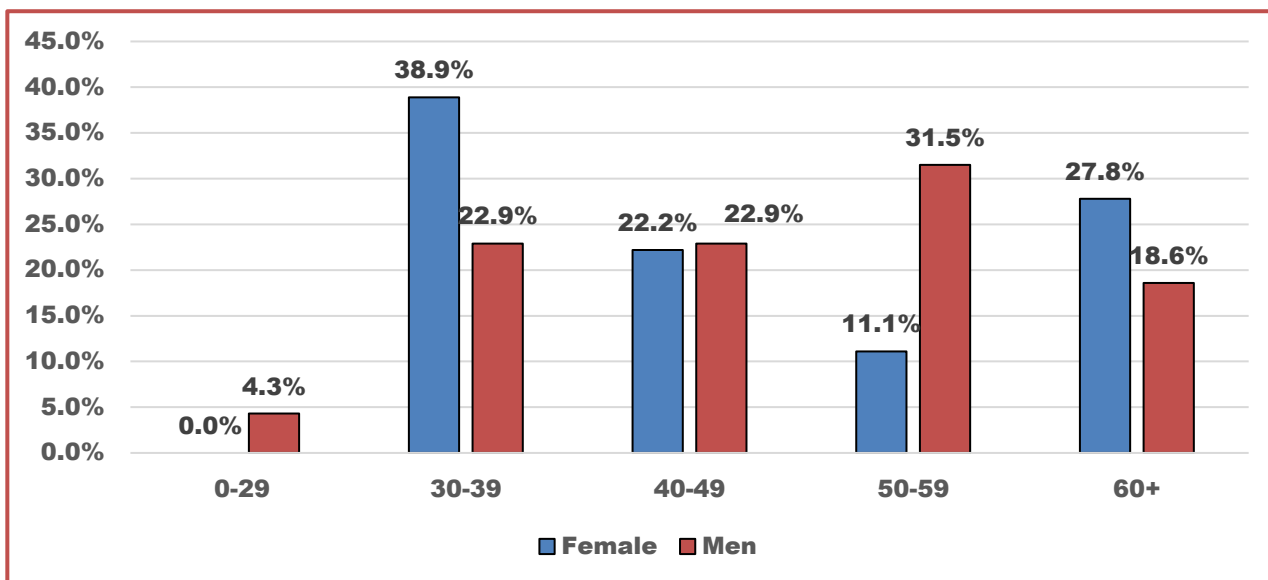


Table 2 indicates the average age of homeless deaths by gender. In 2021 the average age of homeless women was 48.3 years while for homeless men it was dropped from a 20-year average of about 51 years old to 48.3 years old.

**Table 2: Average age of deaths by gender: 2022**

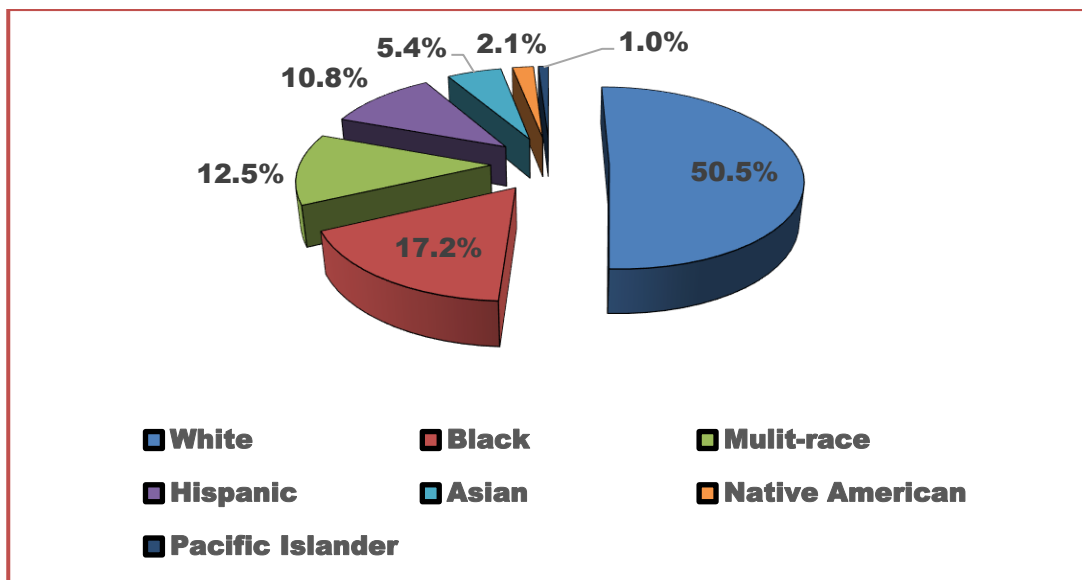
AGE					
GENDER	Minimum	Maximum	Average	N	%
Female	31	73	48.3	18	20.5%
Male	18	71	48.3	70	79.5%

**Homeless Life Expectancy: Life cut short by an average 25%**  
 Using the 2022 national life expectancy average of 76 years old, homeless peoples lives in Sacramento are cut short by an average of about 25% or about 28 years for both homeless women and homeless men in mid-2022

**Ethnicity**

Figure 3 shows the ethnic distribution of homeless deaths in mid-2022. 50.5% were Caucasian; and 49.5% were people of color - 17.2% Black; 12.5% multi-ethnicities; 10.8% Hispanic; 5.4% Asian; and 2.1% Native American and 1% Pacific Islander. Table 3 below indicates the ethnic distribution of homeless deaths from 2017 – 2021.

**Figure 3: Distribution of Homeless Deaths by Ethnicity: Mid-2022**



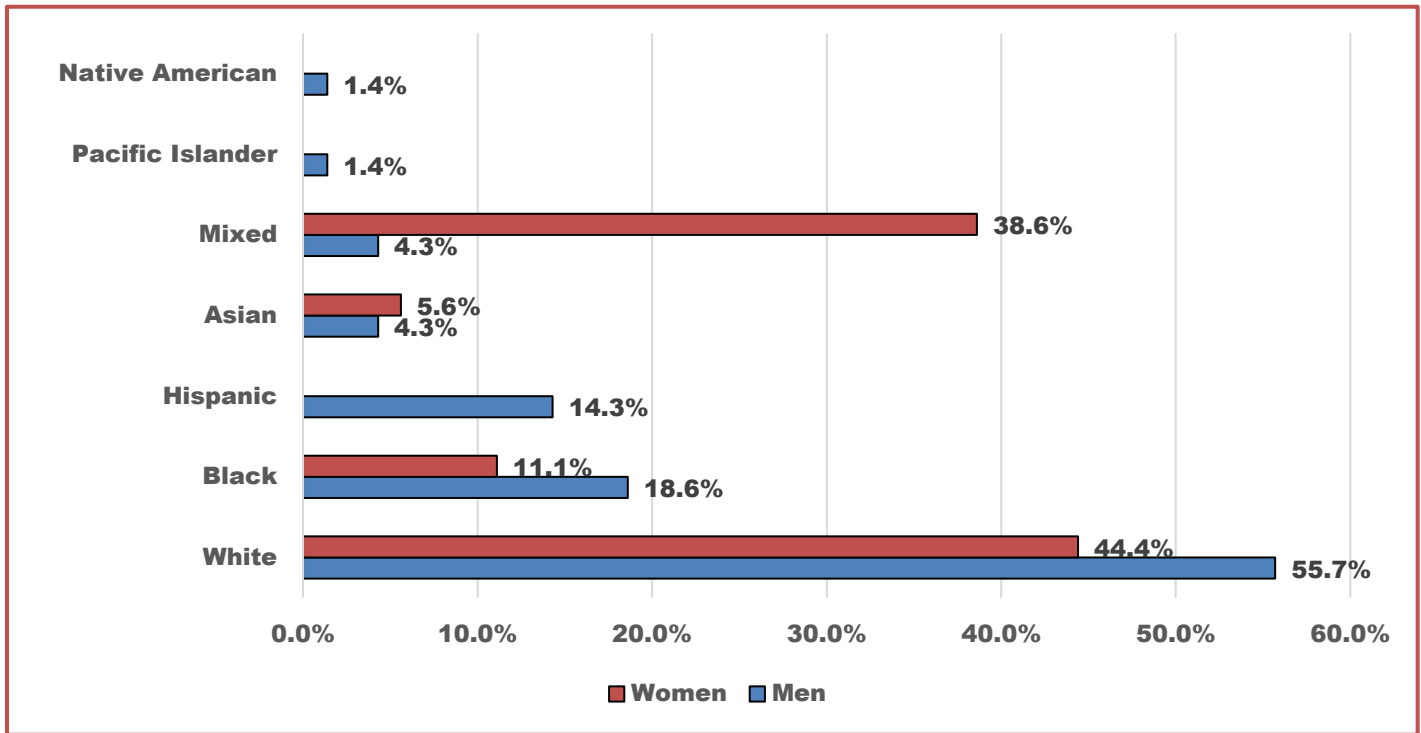
**Key findings:**

- Overall, from 2017 – Mid-2022: Black, Native American and Multi-Ethnic Homeless People of Color are over-represented in the deaths of people experiencing homelessness compared to the general population in the County and City



Figure 4 below compares the ethnicity of homeless men to homeless women who died in mid-2022.

**Figure 4: Deaths of Homeless Women and Men & Ethnicity: Mid-2022**



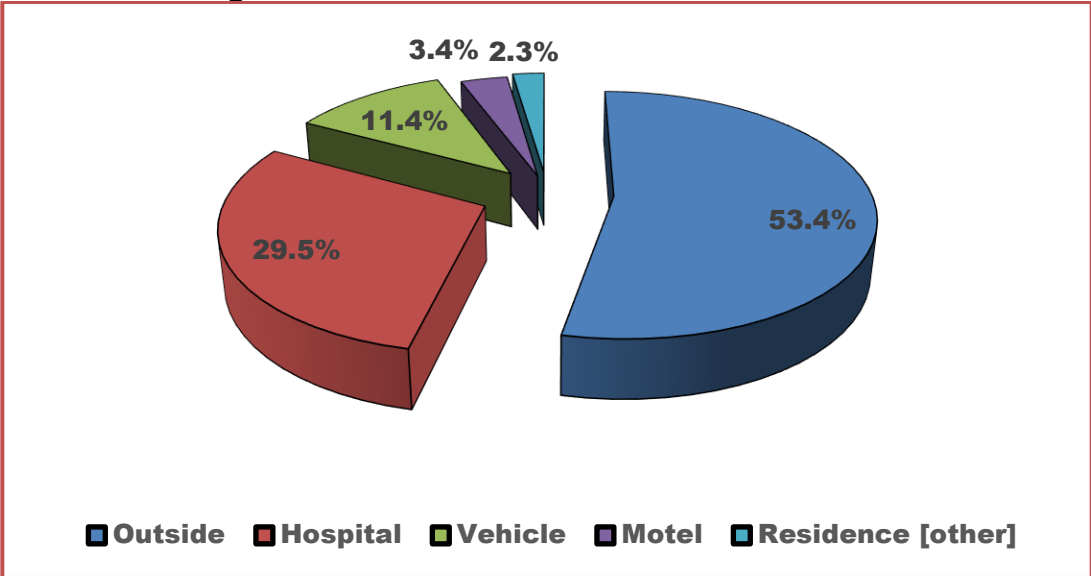
**Key findings:**

- Overall, the percentages of homeless women and men and ethnicity are relatively similar, with two exceptions:
  - ✓ The percentage of multi-ethnic women is nearly 9 times the percentage of homeless multi-ethnic male deaths [38.6% to 4.3% respectively]
  - ✓ The percentage of white male homeless deaths is slightly higher than white female homeless deaths [55.7% to 44.4% respectively]

## Location of Homeless Deaths

As Figure 5 below indicates, more than half of people experiencing homelessness died outdoors [53.4% – on the sidewalk, in a field etc.]. Almost 30% [29.5%] passed away in a local hospital; while 11.4% died in a vehicle; 3.4% passed away in a motel; 2.5% died at a friend’s home.

**Figure 5: Location of Homeless Deaths: Mid-2022**



## Seasonal Distribution of Homeless Deaths

Table 3 below show the distribution of homeless deaths by each month of the year in mid-2022. As the table indicates, the deadliest months for people experiencing homelessness in mid-2022 were the 2 winter months [January and February], accounting for 34 of the homeless deaths [36.6% of the total]

**Table 3: Distribution of homeless deaths by month: Mid- 2022**

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July
15	19	11	16	7	17	8

**Key findings:**

- The deadliest months for people experiencing homelessness in mid-2022 were the two winter months [January and February] accounting for 34 of the homeless deaths [36.6% of the total]

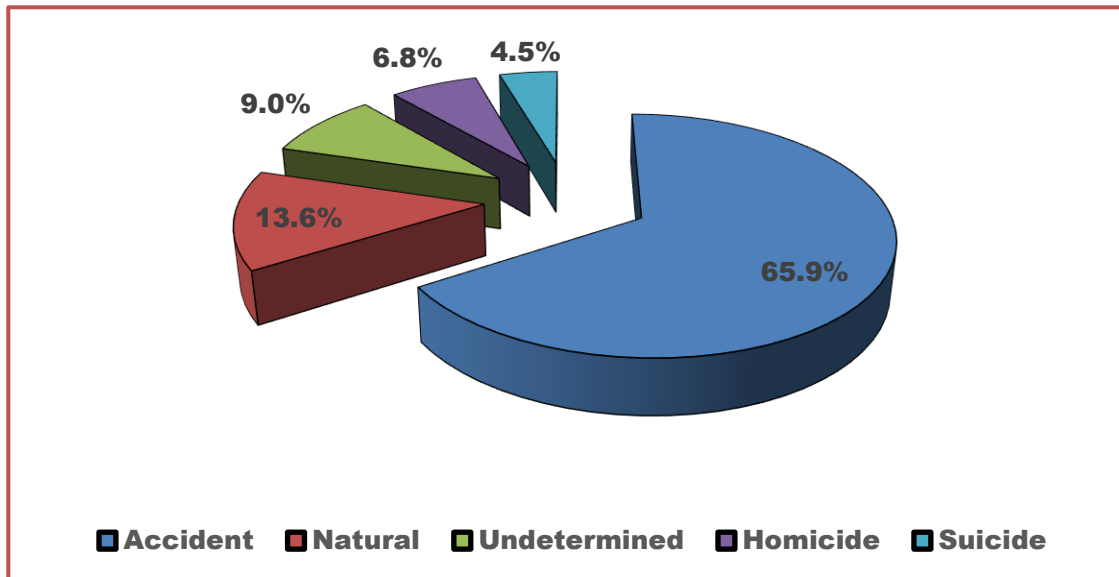
## MANNER AND CAUSES OF DEATH

### MANNER OF DEATH

The manner of death is the category of death indicated on the death certificate, which includes the following five categories: *Natural, Accident [which include substance use disorders deaths/overdose], Suicide, Homicide, and Unknown.*

As Figure 6 shows, only 13.6% of the homeless deaths are natural, with only 6.8% undetermined, leaving 79.6% of the deaths to Accidents [65.9%], Homicides [6.8] and Suicides [4.5%].

Figure 6: Manner of Death: Mid-2022



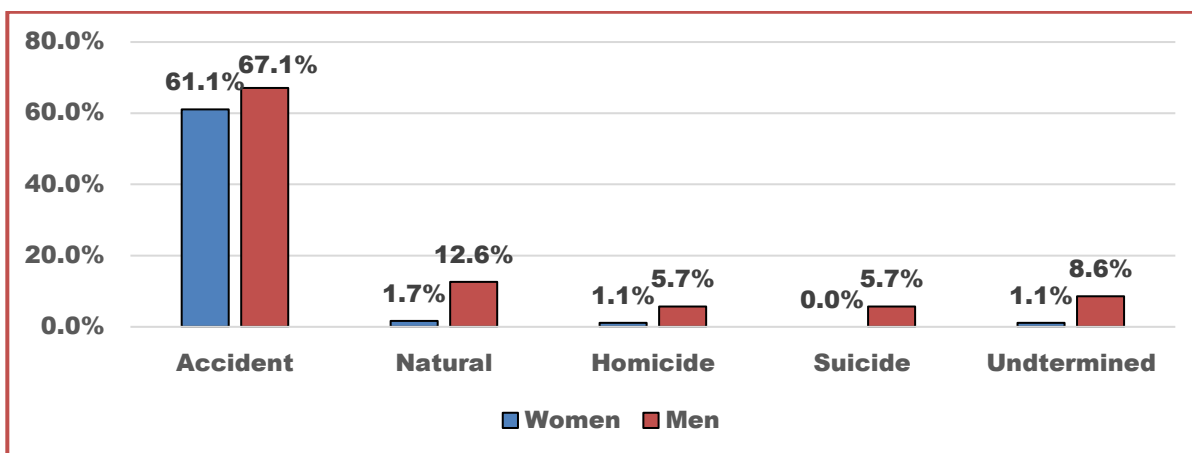
**Key points: Comparing Mid-2022 to 2002 – 2021 manner of deaths – the most significant changes were:**

- A continued steep decline in natural deaths in mid-2022 [13.6%]
- A continued sharp increase in accidental deaths – from an average of 50.1 from 2002 – 2018 to an average of 65.4% for 2019 – 2021; with 2021 being the highest in accidental deaths in 20 years [67.3%]; followed by mid-2022 with 65.9%

## Manner of Death by Gender

Figure 7 compares the manner of death by gender.

**Figure 7: Manner of Death by Gender: Mid-2022**



### Key points: Comparing Manner of Death by gender:

- natural deaths for homeless women were less than 2% [1.7%] compared to 12.6% for homeless men
- homicides of homeless men were over 5 times higher than for homeless women [5.7% and 1.1% respectively];
- All the suicides were by homeless men in mid-2022

## Manner of Death by Ethnicity

Table 4 compares the manner of death by ethnicity.

**Table 4: Manner of death by ethnicity: Mid-2022**

Manner of death	Ethnicity							
	Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Pacific Islander	Multi-Ethnic	Unknown
Accident	50%	15.5%	6.9%	15.5%	-	1.7%	10.3%	-
Unknown	55.5%	22.2%	-	-	11.1%	-	-	-
Natural	58.3%	25%	8.3%	8.3%	-	-	-	-
Homicide	33.3%	16.6%	-	-	-	-	50%	-
Suicide	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

### Key Points:

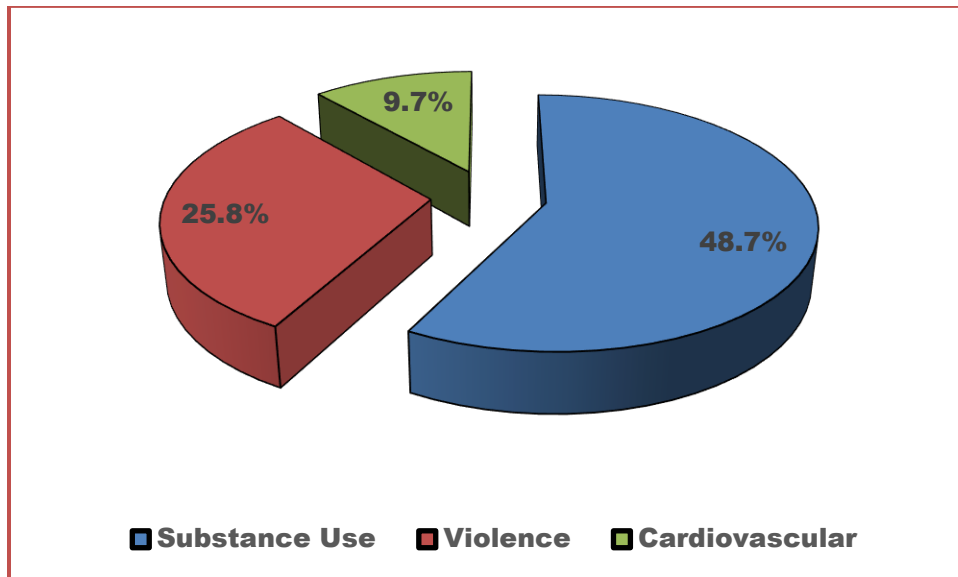
- 50% of deaths by accident were white; and 50% were people of color
- Deaths by natural causes for white homeless people [58.3%] is almost 7 times higher than that of Asian and Hispanic homeless people; over 2 times higher than Black homeless people
- Almost 67% of the homicides were of people of color; with 50% being multi-ethnic people experiencing homelessness

## MAJOR UNDERLYING CAUSES OF DEATH

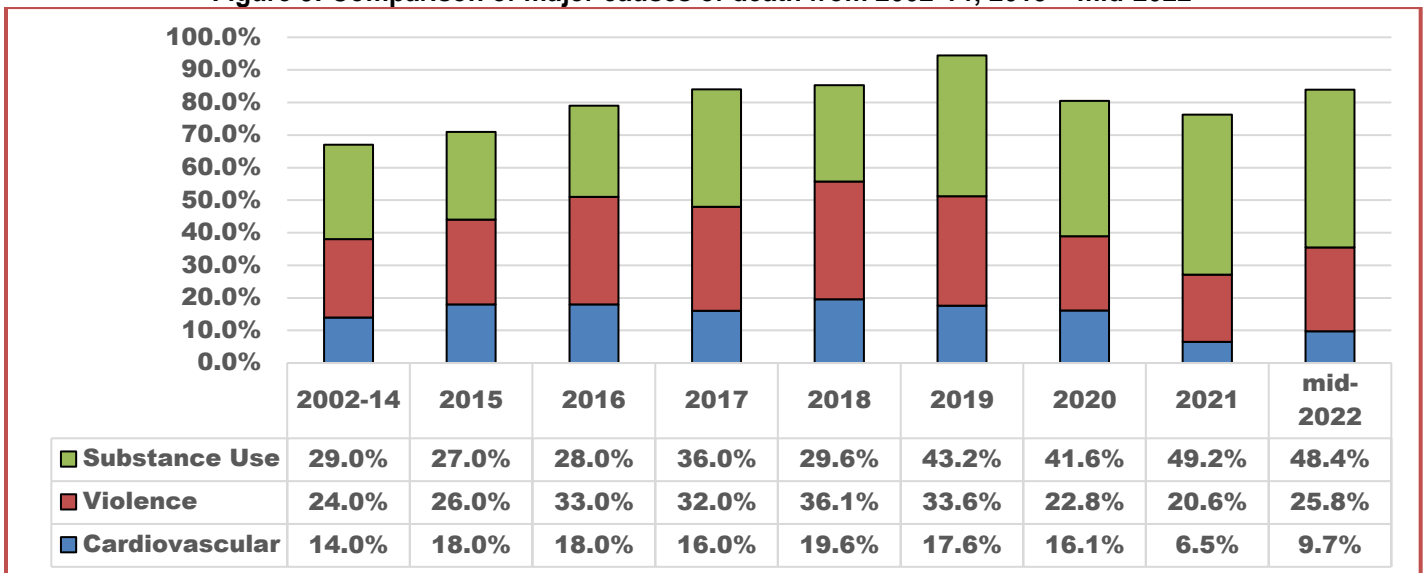
Figure 8 details the major underlying causes of death of people experiencing homelessness in mid-2022. Substance use disorder was the leading cause [49.7%], followed by violent deaths 25/8% [blunt force head injury; stabbings gunshots and hangings, followed by cardiovascular disease 9.7%]. These three major causes accounted for 84.2% of all the deaths of people experiencing homelessness in mid-2022.

Figure 9 compares the major causes of death from 2002 to mid-2022.

**Figure 8: Major Underlying Causes of Death of Homeless People: Mid-2022**



**Figure 9: Comparison of major causes of death from 2002-14; 2015 – mid-2022**



**Key Points:**

- In mid-2022, substance use disorder deaths continued to account for almost 49% [48.4%] of all homeless deaths;
- Violent deaths increased in mid-2022 to over 25% of all homeless deaths and remains the 2<sup>nd</sup> major cause of death for people experiencing homelessness
- Cardiovascular deaths declined sharply in 2021 to only 6.5%, and increase slightly to about 10% of all homeless deaths in mid-2022

**COVID-19 DEATHS**

**Key Point:**

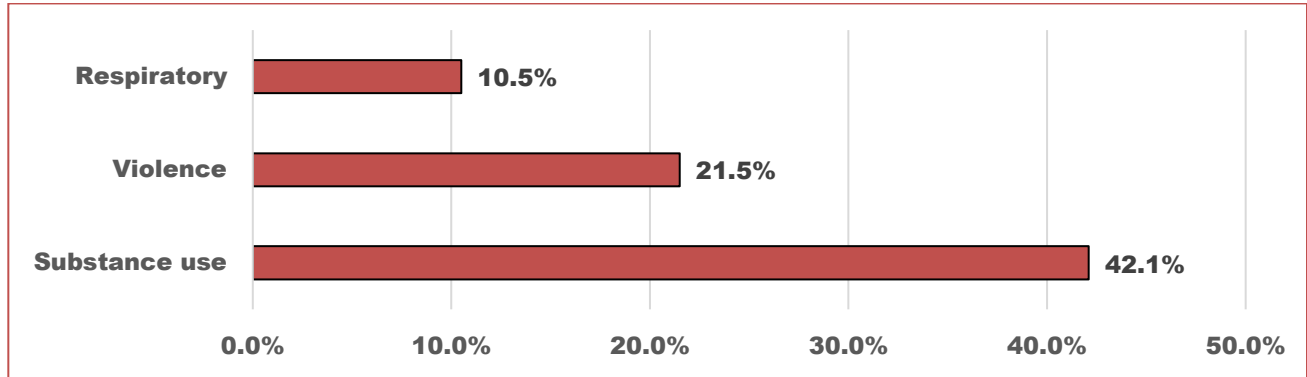
- There 2 deaths from complications due to COVID-19 in mid-2022 or 2.3% of all deaths of people experiencing homelessness in mid-2022

## Major Causes of Death by Gender

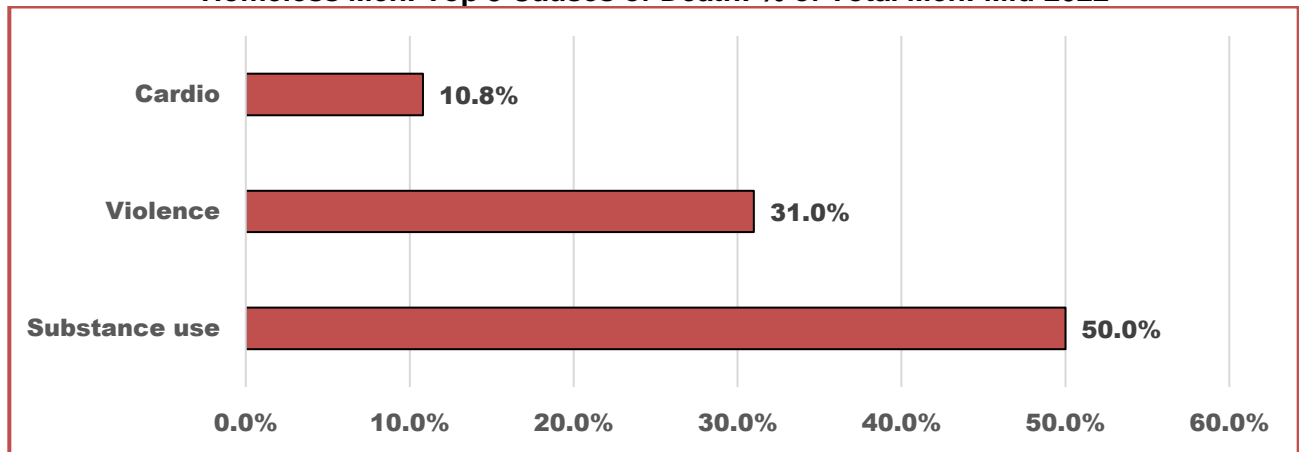
Figure 10 compares the top three causes of death by gender.

Figures 10: Major causes of death by gender

Homeless Women: Top 3 Causes of Death: % of Total Women: Mid-2022



Homeless Men: Top 3 Causes of Death: % of Total Men: Mid-2022



### Key Points:

- Violent deaths of homeless men were 1.45 times higher for homeless men
- Substance use deaths were higher for homeless men than homeless women – 50% and 42.1% respectively

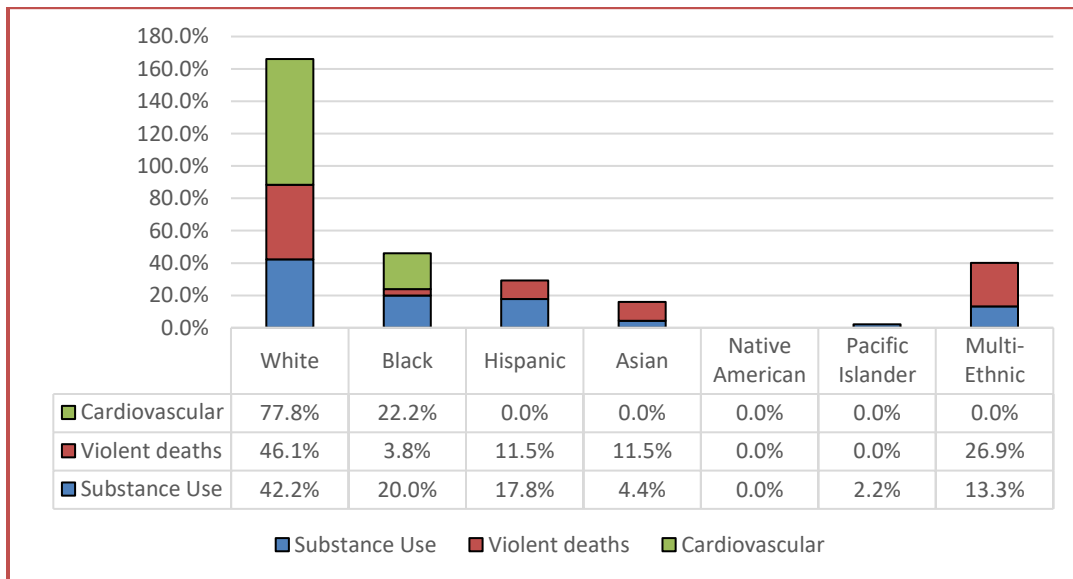
## Major Causes of Death by Ethnicity

Table 5 compares the top three causes of death by ethnicity and Figure 11 represents the same data in graph form.

**Table 5: Top 3 Causes of Death by Ethnicity: Mid-2022**

Top 3 Causes of Death	Ethnicity													
	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian		Native American		Pacific Islander		Multi-Ethnic	
	% Ethnicity	% Total	% Ethnicity	% Total	% Ethnicity	% Total	% Ethnicity	% Total	% Ethnicity	% Total	% Ethnicity	% Total	% Ethnicity	% Total
Substance Use	40.4%	40.4%	50%	17%	70%	21.3%	40%	5.4%	-	-	100%	2.1%	58.3%	14.9%
Violent Deaths	25.3%	25.5%	6.3%	3.8%	20%	7.7%	40%	11.5%	-	-	-	-	58.3%	26.9%
Cardiovascular	14.9%	77.8%	11.5%	22.2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Figure 11: Top 3 Causes of Death by Ethnicity: Mid – 2022**



**Key Points:**

- 46.1% of all white homeless people died violent deaths, 53.9% of homeless people of color died violent death, disproportionately Multi-Ethnic homeless people and Hispanic and Asian homeless people died violent deaths,
- White homeless people accounted for almost 80% [77.8%] of cardiovascular deaths

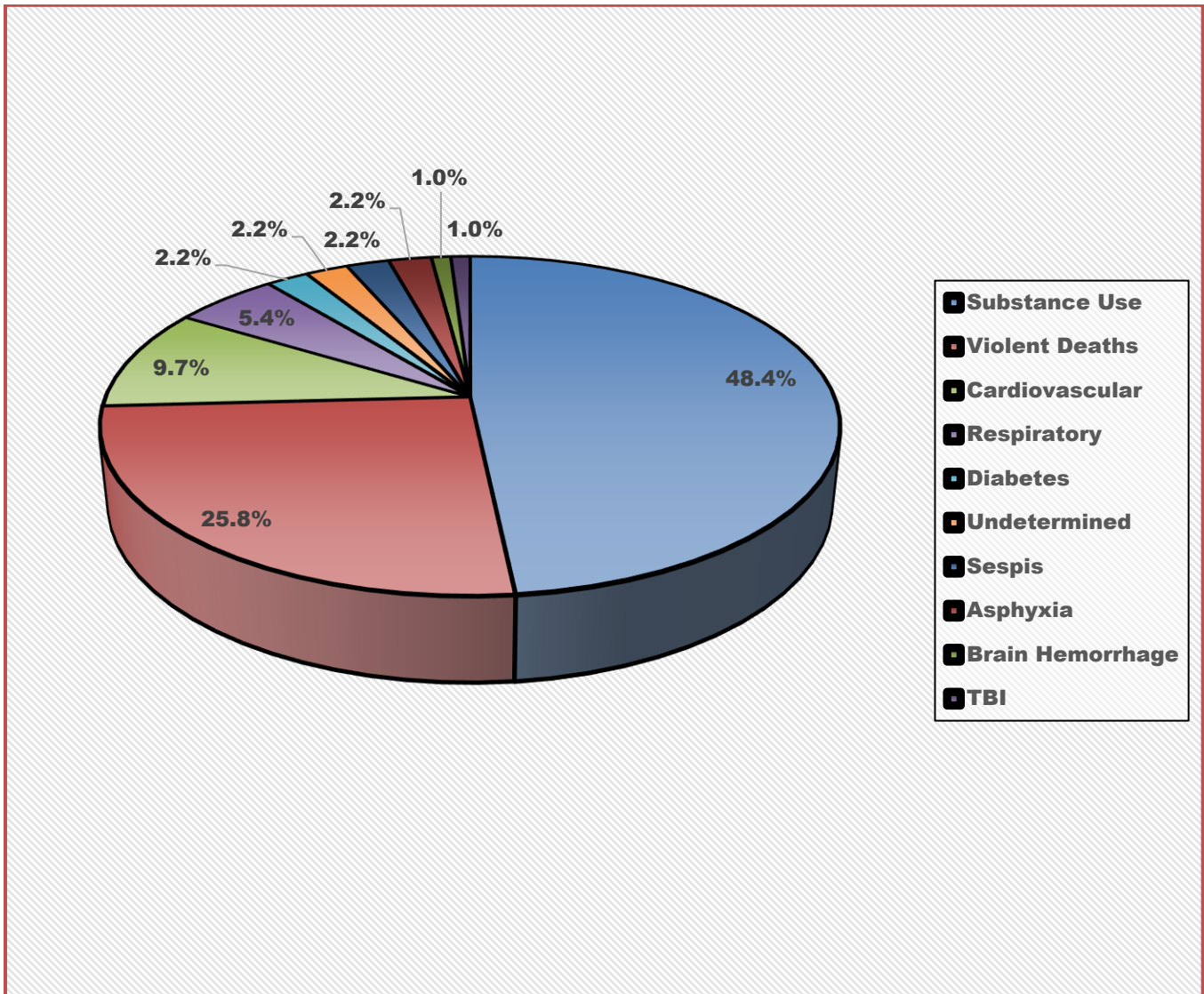


Table 6 below identifies all causes of homeless deaths in mid-2022, with the top three being Meth [21.5%]; Blunt force head injuries [19.4%] and Meth & Fentanyl [16.3%], while Figure 12 presents a pie chart of all the causes of homeless deaths in mid-2022.

**Table 6: All Causes of homeless deaths in Mid- 2022**

Causes of Death	# of Homeless Number of Deaths in Mid-2022	% of Total Homeless Deaths in Mid-2022
<b>Substance use disorders: Total 45</b>		<b>48.4%</b>
Meth	20	21.5%
Meth & Fentanyl	15	16.3%
Mixed Drugs	6	6.5%
Alcohol	3	3.3%
Fentanyl	1	1.5%
<b>Violent Deaths: Total 24</b>		<b>25.8%</b>
Blunt Force Head Injuries	18	19.4%
Gunshots	3	3.2%
Stabbings	2	2.2%
Hangings	1	1%
Cardiovascular	9	9.7%
Respiratory – including 2 from COVID 9	5	5.4%
Diabetes	2	2.2%
Undetermined	2	2.2%
Sepsis	2	2.2%
Asphyxia	2	2.2%
Brain hemorrhage	1	2.2
Traumatic Brain Injury [TBI]	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>

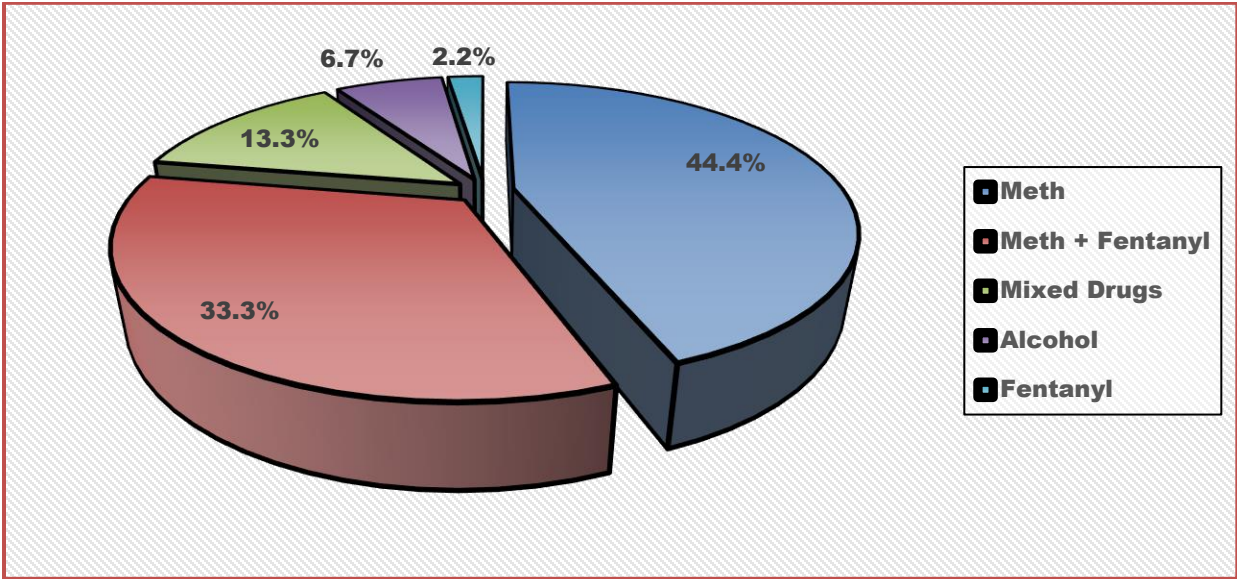
Figure 12: All Causes of Homeless Deaths: Mid - 2022



## Substance Use Disorder Deaths

Figure 13 shows the types of substances that caused the deaths of homeless women and men with methamphetamines [meth] being the leading drug, causing 44.6% of the substance use disorder related deaths in mid- 2022.

**Figure 13: Substance use disorder deaths of homeless women and men in Mid-2022**



### The Continued Rise of Methamphetamines in Homeless Deaths

Table 7 documents the continued dramatic rise in homeless deaths due to methamphetamine [Meth] intoxication.

**Table 7: Continued Rise of Meth in Homeless Deaths: 2002 – Mid-2022**

	# of homeless deaths	# and % of AOD Homeless deaths # %	# of Meth-involved deaths	% of Meth Deaths of all AOD deaths	% Meth-involved deaths of total deaths
2002 -2014	627	175 28%	25	14.3%	4%
2015	78	21 27%	11	52%	14%
2016	71	20 28%	8	40%	11%
2017	124	45 36%	27	60%	21.8%
2018	132	32 24%	28	87.5%	21.2%
2019	138	54 34%	43	79.6%	31.2%
2020	137	57 41.6%	30	52.6%	21.9%
2021	199	98 49.2%	75	76.5%	37.7%
Mid-2022	93	45 48.4%	35	77.8%	37.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,599</b>	<b>547 34.2%</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>51.6%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>

**Key Points:**

- Homeless deaths by Alcohol and Drugs [AOD] continued to increase in mid-2022 to almost half of all deaths [48.4%] – an increase of 1.7 times over the 2002 – 2014 period
- 77.8% of all AOD homeless deaths involved meth and accounted for almost 40% [37.6%] of all homeless deaths in mid-2022

**Violent Causes of Death**

Figure 14 indicates that of the 24 violent deaths of homeless people in mid-2022, 75% were blunt force injuries [hit over the head; hit by a train or automobile]; while 12.5% of the deaths were gunshot wounds; 8.3% stabbings; 4.2% hangings.

**Figure 14: Violent Causes of Death for homeless women and men: Mid-2022**

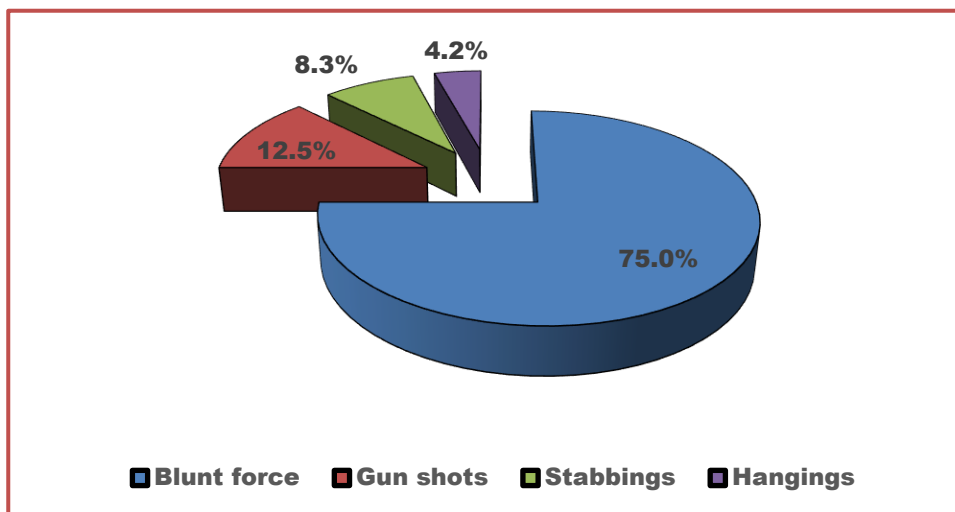
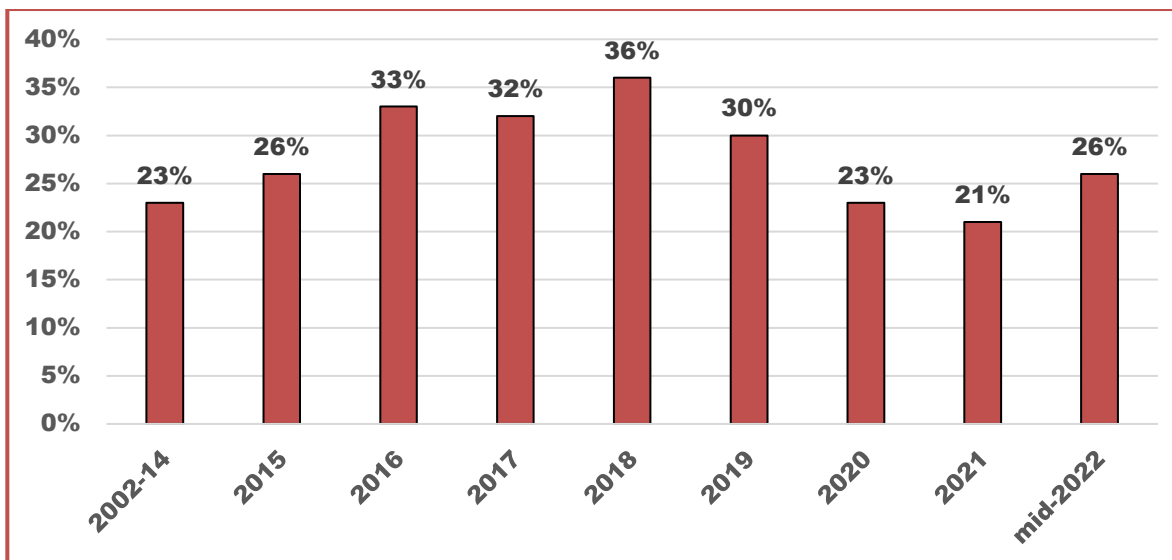


Figure 15 indicates the increase from 2002 – 2014 of violent homeless deaths from 23% to a four-year average [2016 – 2019] of 33% and declining to 23% in 2020 and declined slightly in 2021 to 21% of all homeless deaths, the lowest percentage in 20 years and increase to 26% in mid-2022.

**Figure 15: Violent homeless deaths from 2002 to Mid-2022**



### III. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	FINDINGS
 <p>Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness Unified Regional Approach</p>	<p>City, County and surrounding cities along with a diverse set of stakeholders in the community create a comprehensive regional plan to end and prevent homelessness in 2023</p>	<p>1,599 homeless deaths over 20 years</p> <p>70%+ of people experiencing homelessness are outside due to lack of shelter and affordable housing</p>
 <p>HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT</p>  <p>Affordable Housing Trust Fund</p>	<p>The City &amp; County need to declare that Housing is A Human Right</p> <p>The City &amp; County budgets reflect that affordable housing is a top priority in their 2023 – 24 budgets including increasing their respective affordable housing trust fund budgets to \$100 million each on an annual basis</p>	<p>72% of our unhoused neighbors are outside due to lack of affordable housing and emergency shelter</p>
 <p>Racial Equity as Solution to Homelessness</p>	<p>Implement Sacramento Steps Forward Racial Equity Committee's recommendations in <i>Action Plan: Findings and Recommendations from the CoC Racial Equity Committee, Summer 2021</i></p>	<p>Disproportionately 49.5% of the homeless people who died in in mid-2022 were people of color</p>
	<p>Open 24/7 Respite Centers – warming; cooling and clean air centers without weather activation criteria</p>	<p>In mid-2022, 34% of homeless deaths were in the winter months of January and February</p>
 <p>HARM REDUCTION SAVES LIVES</p>  <p>Trauma Informed Care</p>	<p>Support Treatment on Demand</p> <p>Fund mental health/harm reduction outreach team to do street outreach to encampments</p> <p>The City &amp; County adopt a Trauma-Informed Approach to outreach and engagement efforts</p>	<p>Of all alcohol and other drugs [AOD] deaths of homeless people in mid-2022 – 78% involved Meth</p>
 <p>HOUSE KEYS NOT HANDCUFFS</p> <p>Homelessness Ends With a Home</p>	<p>The City &amp; County stop the continued criminalization of our unhoused neighbors through the passage of punitive ordinances in an effort to circumvent the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in <i>Martin v Boise</i> that ruled that efforts to criminalize people experiencing homelessness violates the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution</p>	<p>According to the 2022 Sacramento Point-In-Time Count, 40% of all unsheltered adults reported having to relocate their tents or vehicles due to requests from law enforcement.</p>

## METHODOLOGY & CREDITS

### Methodology:

This report is based on the report of deaths of people experiencing homelessness, closed cases only, between January 1, 2022 – July 31, 2022 as reported by the Sacramento County Coroner's office.

The data in the Coroner's report included: Name; Date of death; Age; Ethnicity; Causes[s] of death [A,B,C,D]; Manner of death and location

Death Investigation is pursuant to the California Government Code Section 27491 for all deaths meeting the jurisdictional requirements (of Ca Gov. Code Sec 27491) occurring within Sacramento County. Death investigation included the following: Death Scene Investigation (when possible); Forensic Examination of remains (autopsy, external examination and or medical record review); Forensic Toxicology analysis when warranted/possible; Decedent Identification Confirmation; Follow-up investigation/Interviews with all relevant investigative parties/stakeholders (law enforcement, EMS, hospitals, reporting party, service providers, families, friends, coworkers, etc.); Decedent Record review (medical records, criminal records, work history records, military records, local/state/federal personal information database records all inclusive)

As part of the overall investigation the Coroner's office determines the decedent's address. The components included in this determination include the reporting party's information, death scene investigation, interviews of friends and family and witnesses, evidence found at autopsy that may confirm a homeless lifestyle and record checks.

### Data analysis:

Data analysis was performed by Bob Erlenbusch, Executive Director, SRCEH.

### Report and recommendations:

The report was written by Bob Erlenbusch, Executive Director, Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness [SRCEH].

Recommendations were made by the SRCEH Board of Directors.

### Credits

**Photo Credit:** The cover photo of the "Day of the Dead" Altar, Loaves & Fishes, 2013 was taken by Paula Lomazzi, Executive Director, Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee [SHOC]

**Database:** Thank you to Rosa Vega, Sacramento County Coroner, for providing SRCEH the database used for this analysis.

**Infographic Credit:** Infographic provided by Kai Erlenbusch.

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