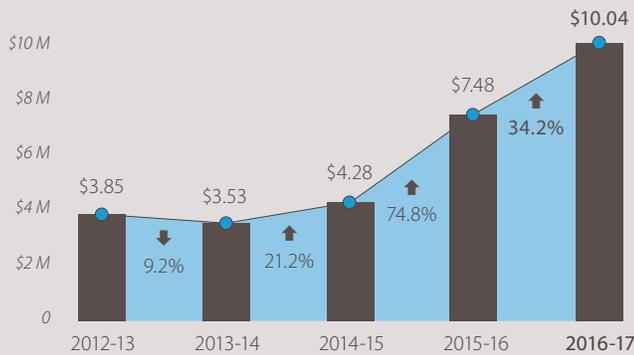
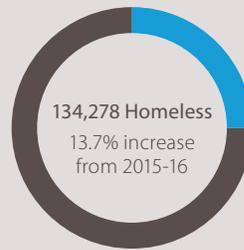


# California Homelessness

**Encampment Cleanup Costs** *In millions of dollars*

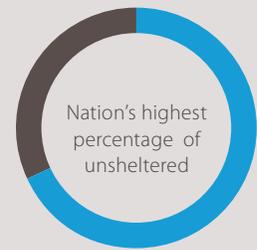


**Homeless Population**  
2016-17



● California 25%  
● Rest of U.S. 75%

**California Unsheltered**  
2016-17



● Unsheltered 68.2%  
● Sheltered 31.8%

## Cost To Clean Up Homeless Camps Climbs

Nearly \$30 Million Spent Since 2012 as State Property Under Growing Pressure

The number of people reported as homeless in California surged over the last year, and that increase is reflected in what Caltrans spent cleaning up homeless encampments along the State Highway System.

Caltrans estimated that the cleanup bill reached \$10.04 million in fiscal year 2017. Crews encountered about 7,000 homeless camps on rights of way of the state's 254 highways. The cleanup amount was 34.2 percent higher than the previous year, and involved all 12 Caltrans regional districts. Since 2012-13, Caltrans has spent about \$29.2 million cleaning up homeless sites.

Statewide, the homeless population increased 13.7 percent in 2016-17 to 134,278, or about 25 percent of the national total, an annual report by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development said.

Homelessness is a problem throughout the country, but is more visible in California where HUD reported 68.2 percent of the homeless population lives in unsheltered locations such as streets and parks. That is the highest percentage in the country.

In 2017, more than 5,600 reports of homeless encampments were submitted by the public through Caltrans' Customer Service Response system. Only reports of potholes (7,075) and graffiti (6,034) exceeded that.

The encampments have the potential to damage highway infrastructure, create community blight, and

pose public health and safety risks.

A typical cleanup takes days, not hours, beginning with a notification posted at an identified site at least 72 hours prior to the start. In some cases where partnerships exist with local agencies, Caltrans employees are accompanied by homeless advocates or social workers, and at least one peace officer, as advocates attempt to help inhabitants find more suitable housing and other necessary services.

On the day of a cleanup, Caltrans workers are escorted by state or local law enforcement as they remove the litter, waste, and a wide variety of personal items left behind. Caltrans workers label, bag and store items at maintenance facilities for at least 90 days. Unclaimed items are disposed of after 90 days.

The Department is now working with officials in San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose to allow those cities to locate transitional shelters within state rights of way. Caltrans also has created statewide program manager position to guide its response to homeless issues that occur on state property. Homeless liaison positions are being established as well in several regional districts to manage and mitigate encampment impacts. ■

*Source: Caltrans Division of Maintenance; Office of Strategic Management*