



# Americans' Awareness of Youth Homelessness

## Ipsos Poll on Behalf of NN4Y

**Washington, DC, March 11, 2019** – In support of the Street Child World Cup, Ipsos has partnered with the National Network for Youth and Street Child United to raise awareness of youth homelessness and for the event in which street children from around the globe represent their countries in a soccer tournament.

According to the survey results, Americans generally underestimate the number of young homeless adults in the country. When asked to approximate the number of homeless young adults between ages 18 and 25, only 13% correctly answered with an estimation between 3 and 4 million. 48% estimated a lower population and only 14% overestimated the population.

Americans also seem disconnected on problems facing young homeless people. “Couch surfers,” those without a permanent home, but who can often find shelter with a friend, are considered to be homeless. However, when asked whether they consider this type of person to be homeless, just 39% of those surveyed agreed these people face homelessness. Furthermore, Americans continue to view substance abuse and mental health issues as causes of homelessness, rather than symptoms. When asked if they believe the majority of homeless people with substance abuse or mental health problems had these issues before experiencing homelessness, 70% (substance abuse) and 73% (mental health) wrongly assumed that these problems existed before becoming homeless.

Despite these results, Americans overwhelmingly support legislation to combat homelessness among the young population. 88% agree that the success of our young people will directly impact the success of their communities, and more than eight in ten support prioritizing funding for programs that help young homeless people achieve their GEDs at both the federal (83%) and state level (84%).

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1. Dealing with the problem of youth homelessness is...

	Total
Very/Somewhat important	91%
Not very/Not at all important	5%
Don't know	4%

2. In your opinion, among the 35 million young adults between ages 18 and 25, how many do you believe experience homelessness in a given year?

*Note: Asterisk (\*) denotes correct answer.*

	Total
Less than 2 million	23%
Between 2 and 3 million	25%
Between 3 and 4 million*	13%
Between 4 and 5 million	6%
More than 5 million	8%
Don't know	26%

3. In your opinion, among the 21 million young adults between ages 13 and 17, how many do you believe experience homelessness in a given year?

*Note: Asterisk (\*) denotes correct answer.*

	Total
Less than 500,000	14%
Between 500,000 and 1 million*	24%
Between 1 million and 1.5 million	14%
Between 1.5 million and 2 million	11%
More than 2 million	11%
Don't know	26%

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4. For each of the following characteristics, please indicate whether you think they make a young person more likely, less likely, or as likely as their peers to experience homelessness. – More likely

*Note: Asterisk (\*) denotes answers that make a young person more likely to experience homelessness.*

	Total
Spending time in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems*	57%
Being an unmarried, young parent*	42%
Being a racial or ethnic minority*	41%
Identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ)*	36%
Knowing a young homeless person	18%
Being a woman	17%
Having a parent who works multiple jobs	16%
Having a high school degree or GED	10%

5. Do you believe the following are true or false statements? - TRUE

*Note: Asterisk (\*) denotes true statements.*

	Total
Young people between the ages of 13 and 25 who sleep on a friend's couch are considered to be homeless*	39%
Most young homeless people with substance abuse problems had a substance abuse problem before becoming homeless	70%
Most young homeless people with mental health issues struggled with mental health issues before becoming homeless.	73%

6. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? – Total Agree

	Total
The success of our young people has a direct impact on the success of our communities	88%
My state government should prioritize funding for programs that help young homeless people finish high school and find a job	84%
The federal government should prioritize funding for programs that help young homeless people finish high school and find a job	83%

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My state government should prioritize reducing youth homelessness	82%
The federal government should prioritize reducing youth homelessness	81%
Young people who can find food and shelter by couch surfing should still be allowed to use public services providing food and shelter	79%

7. How familiar, if at all, are you with the Street Child World Cup?

	Total
Very/Somewhat familiar	7%
Not very/Not at all familiar	81%
Don't know	12%

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## About the Study

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted February 2-February 4, 2018. For the survey, a sample of roughly 1,005 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online in English.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos's online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=1,005, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=5.0).

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

### For more information on this news release, please contact:

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Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,749.5 million in 2018.

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We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions.  
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