



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 9/24/2024

To: County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Health Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: James Alexander 707-565-4096, Michael Gause 707-565-4099

Vote Requirement: Informational Only

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Results of 2024 “Point-in-Time” Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Recommended Action:

Receive the January 26, 2024, Point-in-Time Homeless Count in Sonoma County.

Executive Summary:

The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) federal agency requires that Continuums of Care (CoCs) conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. CoCs also must conduct a count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness every other year (odd numbered years). Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally.

Sonoma County’s CoC is known as the Homeless Coalition (Coalition), which is a collaborative effort representing the homeless services system of care. The Coalition is governed by a seventeen-member Board, consisting of local elected officials, nonprofit representatives, subject matter experts, and individuals with lived homeless experience. The Sonoma County Department of Health Service provides staff support and coordination. [≤](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/homelessness-)

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The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. In 2024, under the coordination of Applied Survey Research, the Sonoma County PIT Count took place on Friday, January 26, 2024.

In 2024, 2,522 individuals were counted, an increase of 11% from 2,266 individuals in 2023. Based on sample survey 29% experienced homelessness for the 1st time and Sonoma County was the place of residence at the time of housing loss.

The number of individuals in unsheltered circumstances increased from 1,291 in 2023 to 1,577 in 2024 while the number of individuals in sheltered circumstances decreased from 975 in 2023 to 945 in 2024.

Despite the 11% increase, the number of individuals remains lower than 2,893 individuals counted in 2022. A general overview of possible causes of the increase are included below.

Discussion:

2024 PIT Count Results

As Lead Agency to the Sonoma County Continuum of Care (CoC), the Sonoma County Department of Health Services conducts the annual PIT Count to track progress towards ending homelessness in Sonoma County. US HUD requires a local PIT Count of any CoC to enable participating agencies to access HUD’s CoC funding (in 2024, this is approximately \$4.2 million for Sonoma County). Additionally, some State agencies use PIT Count data to formulate funding allocations. Further, when combined with data from our Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the count informs the County’s homeless housing needs.

The 2024 PIT count of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in one night suggests increased potentially a result of:

- The closing of additional COVID-era sheltering and other supportive housing programs, and continued lack of affordable housing (a loss of close to 100 beds in 2024).
- Increases in new individuals experiencing first time homelessness.
- Lack of homelessness prevention programs (note: a regional pilot prevention program with \$3.9 million in funding starts in October 2024 serving the entire County).

Figure 3: Total Homeless Census Population by Shelter Status and Jurisdiction

JURISDICTION	UNSHelterED			SHelterED			TOTAL		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
North County	155	103	141	40	15	16	195	118	152
Cloverdale	23	9	6	0	0	3	23	9	9
Healdsburg	97	18	37	0	15	13	97	33	50
Town of Windsor	8	26	26	40	0	0	48	26	26
Unincorporated	27	50	67	0	0	0	27	50	67
South County	679	337	434	89	163	181	768	500	615
Cotati	79	9	21	6	6	10	85	15	31
Petaluma	214	157	143	79	88	97	293	245	240
Rohnert Park	241	141	205	4	69	74	369	210	279
Unincorporated	21	30	65	0	0	0	21	30	65
West County	62	143	128	65	70	49	127	213	177
Sebastopol	40	47	108	38	40	10	78	87	118
Unincorporated	22	96	20	27	30	39	49	126	59
Sonoma Valley	93	109	74	29	20	12	122	129	86
Sonoma	66	40	13	15	0	0	81	40	13
Unincorporated	27	69	61	14	20	12	41	89	73
Santa Rosa	1,099	599	805	582	695	664	1,681	1,294	1,469
Santa Rosa	1,089	465	701	569	695	664	1,658	1,160	1,365
Unincorporated	10	134	104	13	0	0	23	134	104
Undisclosed Location	0	0	0	0	12	23	0	12	23
Total	2,088	1,291	1,577	805	975	945	2,893	2,266	2,522

Survey

Each year, following the PIT Count, surveys are conducted with individuals and families experiencing

homelessness (both sheltered and unsheltered). This is done to gain insight on demographics and experience of single adults, families, and transition-age youth experiencing homelessness. These surveys, over 300 in total, were conducted representing a confidence interval of +/- 4% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of individuals experiencing homelessness. Surveys were conducted in a peer-to-peer fashion in the two weeks after the PIT Count and include key information on homeless subpopulations, which HUD has identified as key to ending homelessness overall, as well as underlying causes of homelessness.

Subpopulations of individuals experiencing homelessness include individuals experiencing chronic homelessness (defined generally as at least one year of continuous homelessness with a disability), transition age youth ages 18-24, homeless families with children, and veterans. Within these subpopulations:

- 606 individuals experienced chronic homelessness, a 10% increase from 550 individuals in 2023.
- 57 families (having at least one adult over 18 and at least one child under 18) totaling 198 individuals were almost all found in sheltered settings. This a decrease from 62 families in 2023.
- 10 unaccompanied children (persons under 18 without parents) and 147 transition-age youth ages 18-24 were counted, for a total of 157 youth, a decrease of 50% from 294 youth in 2023. Note, the count was conducted *prior* to the closure of Social Advocates for Youth (SAY).
- 162 veterans, an increase from 100 veterans in 2023.

Additional key findings from the PIT count and survey included:

- 79% of those experiencing homelessness became homeless while living in Sonoma County. This is comparable to all previous counts aside from 2022.
- 25% of individuals cited job loss as the primary cause of their homelessness, and 57% of individuals cited unaffordable rent as an obstacle in securing permanent housing. Another 47% cited no job or not enough income as an obstacle.
- 29% of individuals reported this as their first episode of homelessness (the new prevention program will address this critical area of inflow to the system).
- 38% of individuals experienced homelessness for the first time before age 25. 14% reported experiencing homelessness for the first time at age 50 or older (an increase in the older adult population from 10% in 2023).
- 15% of individuals identified as Latino/a/x, 7% identified as Black, and 6% identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native.

The comprehensive report (Attachment 1) has more information about the people who are living in a place not meant for human habitation or in a shelter for homeless persons in Sonoma County, as well as those who experienced unstable housing in Sonoma County.

How does the PIT Count influence development of solutions?

Below are strategies the County and partner organizations are completing to address the needs of the homeless and unsheltered populations:

- Complete Project Homekey efforts such as George's Hideaway in Guerneville, Behavioral Health Bridge

Housing grant-funded 440 Arrowood in Santa Rosa, as well as ongoing Encampment Resolution Fund projects.

- Though COVID funding is winding down, additional State funding for individuals with behavioral health conditions also experiencing homelessness is expected from Proposition 1 and Behavioral Health Bridge Housing, as well as continued Homeless Housing Advocacy and Prevention (HHAP) funds that will focus on permanent housing and non-congregate shelters.
- Continued alignment and relationships between the region’s two housing authorities, the Homeless Coalition, cities and County governing bodies, including the County’s own Interdepartmental Multidisciplinary Team (IMDT)/Homeless Encampment Assistance & Resource Team (HEART).
- Implementation of the Strategic Plan that was adopted in 2023 by both the CoC/Homeless Coalition and County. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Main%20County%20Site/Health%20and%20Human%20Services>

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County’s Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

Pillar: Healthy and Safe Communities

Goal: Goal 4: Reduce the County’s overall homeless population by 10% each year by enhancing services through improved coordination and collaboration.

Objective: Objective 3: Create a “no wrong door” approach where clients who need services across multiple departments and programs are able to access the array of services needed regardless of where they enter the system.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

September 9, 2023: Homelessness Program Updates, Including Replacing the Emergency Shelter Site at the County Campus and Los Guilicos Village, Transfer of Grant Agreements, and Results of the 2023 “Point in time” Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 24-25 Adopted	FY 25-26 Projected	FY 26-27 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	0	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			

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State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	0	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - 2024 Sonoma County Point in Time Count Report

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None