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Stanislaus County Reports Decline in Homelessness in 2026 Point-In-Time Count

Modesto, CA. – The Stanislaus Community System of Care (CSOC) has released its 2026 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count, identifying 1,791 people experiencing homelessness in Stanislaus County. The total represents a 14 percent decrease from the 2,086 individuals counted in 2025.

The 2026 count found significant reductions in both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, with the most notable improvement occurring among those living without shelter. The number of unsheltered individuals decreased from 950 in 2025 to 686 in 2026, a reduction of 28 percent.

"The annual count provides valuable information that helps the Community System of Care, local governments, service providers, and nonprofit organizations evaluate our progress and identify where additional resources are needed," said **Maryn Pitt, Chair of the Stanislaus Community System of Care**. "This year's results show meaningful progress, particularly in reducing unsheltered homelessness and homelessness among veterans and families. While we are encouraged by these outcomes, the data also reminds us that housing affordability, health challenges, and barriers to accessing services continue to impact many residents in our community."

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires all local Continuums of Care (CoCs) to conduct Point-In-Time Counts as a condition of receiving federal homelessness assistance funding. The PIT Count provides a snapshot of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on a single night during the last ten days of January.

The 2026 count identified 686 unsheltered individuals and 1,105 sheltered individuals throughout Stanislaus County.

"This is now the fourth consecutive year that more people experiencing homelessness were sheltered than unsheltered," Pitt added. "Sixty-two percent of individuals counted were residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or other temporary housing programs. That trend reflects the commitment of our providers, outreach teams, and community partners to connect people with services and safe places to stay."

HOW DO THE NUMBERS COMPARE TO THE 2025 PIT COUNT?

The year-to-year comparison shows measurable progress across several key indicators:

- Total homelessness decreased by 295 people, from 2,086 in 2025 to 1,791 in 2026.
- Unsheltered homelessness decreased by 28 percent, from 950 individuals to 686.
- Sheltered homelessness decreased slightly by 3 percent, from 1,136 individuals to 1,105.
- The percentage of sheltered individuals increased from 54 percent in 2025 to 62 percent in 2026.
- Veteran homelessness decreased by 22 percent.
- Family homelessness decreased by 33 percent.
- Chronic homelessness decreased by 4 percent.
- The County added 40 emergency shelter and transitional housing beds during the past year.

While these findings indicate positive movement, local officials caution that several factors may have influenced the count. Volunteers observed increased law enforcement activity in areas where unsheltered individuals are often located, and some individuals appeared reluctant to engage with count teams due to concerns regarding governmental or immigration-related activity. Volunteer participation also declined by approximately 44 percent compared to 2025.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2026 PIT COUNT

Who Are the People Who are Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless?

Many individuals surveyed reported significant health and disability challenges.

- 75 percent of people reported living with at least one disabling condition.
- 40 percent of people reported a chronic health condition.
- 36 percent of people reported a physical disability.
- 28 percent of people reported a serious mental illness.
- 14 percent of people reported a substance use disorder.
- Only 26 percent of people surveyed reported receiving disability-related benefits despite high rates of disabling conditions.

Where Are the People Who are Homeless?

- 62 percent of the count (1,105 people) came from the sheltered population, including people staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs.

- 38 percent (686 people) were people who are unsheltered and living on streets, in parks, abandoned buildings, encampments, or vehicles.
- Four percent of all individuals counted were living in vehicles, consistent with 2025 findings.
- Modesto continued to account for the largest share of the county's homeless population, followed by Turlock and other communities throughout Stanislaus County.

What Are the Reasons for People Becoming Homeless?

Survey respondents identified the following leading causes:

- 50 percent of people surveyed cited eviction or rent increases.
- 38 percent of people surveyed cited health issues.
- 28 percent of people surveyed cited the loss of a family member or household dissolution.
- 22 percent of people surveyed cited job or income loss.

These findings highlight the growing connection between housing affordability, economic instability, and homelessness.

What Are the Obstacles to Accessing Services?

Respondents identified several barriers that prevent them from obtaining assistance:

- 46 percent of people surveyed said lack of transportation.
- 34 percent of people surveyed said they did not know where to go for help.
- 32 percent of people surveyed said they lacked identification or other required documentation.
- 26 percent of people surveyed reported they did not qualify for available programs.
- 21 percent of people surveyed said they were placed on waiting lists for services.

Other Key Findings

The PIT Count continues to demonstrate the connection between homelessness, healthcare systems, and the justice system:

- 53 percent of people reported spending time in jail or prison.
- 51 percent of people reported staying overnight in a hospital.
- 27 percent of people reported being in a treatment center.
- 15 percent of people reported a history of juvenile detention.
- 13 percent of people reported experience in foster care.
- 9 percent of people reported living in a group home.
- 3 percent of people reported being survivors of human trafficking.

When Was the PIT Count Conducted?

The 2026 Point-In-Time Count was conducted on January 28, 2026, utilizing Stanislaus County's Incident Command System (ICS) framework to ensure consistent methodology, geographic coverage, volunteer deployment, and data quality standards. All submitted data underwent extensive review and verification processes before final results were finalized. This review included removal of duplicated responses or surveys.

The Point-In-Time Count is organized by the Stanislaus Community System of Care (CSOC), a partnership of local governments, nonprofit organizations, housing providers, healthcare partners, and community collaborators working together to address homelessness throughout Stanislaus County.

For more information about the Stanislaus Community System of Care and local homelessness response efforts, please visit CSOC's website www.csocstan.com or contact Maryn Pitt, CoC Chair at (209) 485-5017.
