

STANISLAUS COUNTY

2026 POINT IN TIME COUNT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The annual Point in Time (PIT) Count is a federal requirement that provides local communities with critical information about the unhoused population on a single night in January. While the resulting data is valuable, it should be combined with other data sources to give a more holistic and accurate picture of homelessness.

Stanislaus County conducted its PIT Count on January 28, 2026, utilizing the standardized Incident Command System (ICS) framework to conduct the annual Point in Time (PIT) count. This consistent approach ensured robust methodology, deployment structure, volunteer engagement, geographic coverage, and data verification processes. All submitted data underwent rigorous data quality review, confirming a validated decrease in both sheltered and unsheltered counts compared to previous years.

The 2026 PIT Count identified 1,791 people experiencing homelessness in Stanislaus County, with 62 percent residing in a sheltered setting. Notably, while the overall homeless population declined from 2025 to 2026, the proportion of sheltered individuals increased by 8 percentage points (up from 54 percent in 2025). Over the past year, shelter capacity was expanded with 40 additional beds across Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing projects. Despite this increase, shelter bed utilization declined from 82 percent in 2025 to 77 percent in 2026. The number of unsheltered individuals fell by 28 percent, while those in shelter decreased by only 3 percent.

The count also reflected decreases among key subpopulations: veterans (down 22 percent), families (down 33 percent), and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness (down 4 percent). Four percent of those counted were living in vehicles, consistent with 2025 figures.

Preliminary observations suggest several operational and environmental conditions may have contributed to a lower reported count of unsheltered homelessness. Volunteers noted an increased law enforcement presence in areas where unsheltered individuals are typically observed, which may have led to displacement or reduced visibility. Some individuals were less willing to engage with count teams due to concerns about governmental or immigration related activity, and others appeared to actively avoid contact.

Volunteer participation also declined by approximately 44 percent from the prior year. In response, the County increased deployment of outreach team members to help ensure full coverage of designated areas; however, this shift may have influenced overall count dynamics.

These factors may have played a role in the reduced numbers reported.

Survey results highlighted the top four causes of homelessness, which align closely with households seeking prevention assistance. Fifty percent of households reported eviction or rent increase as the primary cause, followed by 38 percent citing health issues, 28 percent due to loss of family members or dissolution of households, and 22 percent related to job or income loss. Other causes, including legal issues, incarceration, and domestic violence, represented a smaller portion of the population.

Health and disability are significant factors in housing instability. Seventy-five percent of respondents reported living with at least one disabling condition, including chronic health conditions (40 percent), physical disabilities (36 percent), serious mental illness (28 percent), and substance use disorders (14 percent). Despite these challenges, only 26 percent reported receiving disability benefits, revealing critical gaps in access to income support and service systems.

These findings underscore both progress and ongoing challenges in addressing homelessness in Stanislaus County. The County's efforts to increase shelter capacity, maintain rigorous data standards, and adapt outreach strategies have contributed to measurable improvements, while persistent barriers highlight the need for investment in prevention, health services, and support systems.

Accessing services presents additional hurdles. Lack of transportation was the most reported barrier at 46 percent, while 34 percent were unsure where to go for help, and 32 percent lacked the required documentation to access services. Other barriers include not qualifying for available programs (26 percent) or being waitlisted (21 percent), pointing to systemic and practical obstacles that prevent individuals from receiving timely assistance. Stanislaus County's homeless population also carries a history of institutional interactions. More than half (53 percent) have been in jail or prison, 51 percent have spent nights in hospitals, and 27 percent in treatment centers. Smaller but notable percentages report prior experiences in foster care (13 percent), group homes (9 percent), juvenile detention (15 percent), and human trafficking (3 percent). These experiences illustrate the interconnectedness of homelessness with justice, healthcare, and social systems.

Despite these challenges, the PIT Count was conducted using the County's established methodology and verified through standard quality assurance procedures. Attached are key findings from overall numbers and completed surveys.

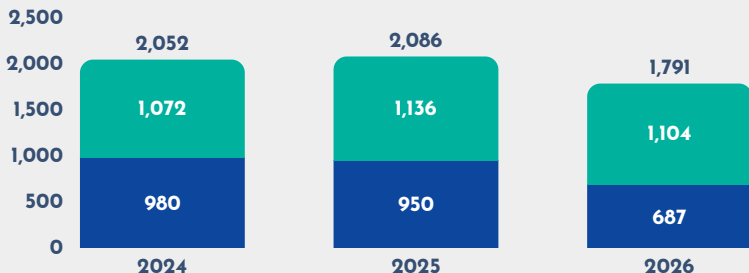
STANISLAUS COUNTY

2026 PIT COUNT OVERALL RESULTS

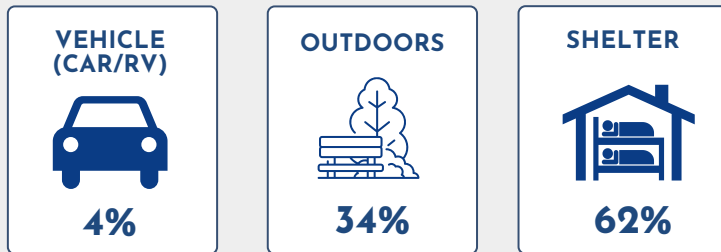
Results are from all people experiencing homelessness counted and surveyed during the Point-in-Time Count

CENSUS POPULATION TREND

● Unsheltered ● Sheltered



SLEEPING LOCATIONS



SHELTER STATUS



SEX



62%
MALE



38%
FEMALE

HOUSEHOLD TYPE



Adult-Only Households

55% | 45%
Sheltered | Unsheltered
1,528 people in 1,513 households (85%)



Families

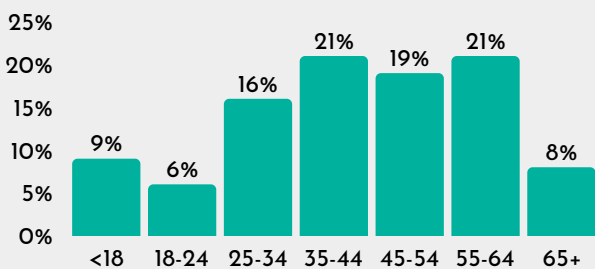
99% | 1%
Sheltered | Unsheltered
261 people in 85 households (15%)



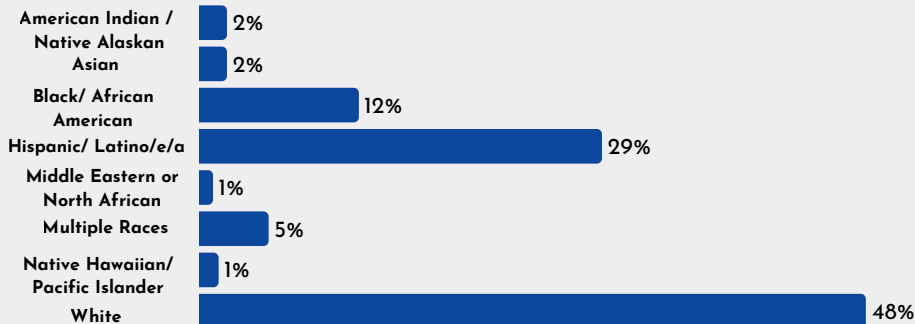
Children Only (<18)

50% | 50%
Sheltered | Unsheltered
2 people in 2 households (<1%)

AGE RANGES



RACIAL IDENTITIES



*Middle Eastern or North African was recently added as part of the 2024 data standards.

SELECT SUBPOPULATIONS



Chronically Homeless

55% | 45%
Sheltered | Unsheltered
532 People (30%)



Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults (<25)

72% | 28%
Sheltered | Unsheltered
85 People (5%)



Veterans

46% | 54%
Sheltered | Unsheltered
54 People (3%)



Older Adults (55+)

69% | 31%
Sheltered | Unsheltered
516 People (29%)

ADDITIONAL SUBPOPULATIONS

Serious Mental Illness



28%

HIV/Aids Related Illness



1%

Substance Use Disorder



14%

Fleeing Domestic Violence



13%

STANISLAUS COUNTY 2026 PIT COUNT SURVEY RESULTS

Results are based on 1,582 people interviewed experiencing homelessness

RESIDENCE PRIOR TO BECOMING HOMELESS

n=1,582 respondents who answered

Within Stanislaus County **82%**
Outside of Stanislaus County **18%**

LENGTH OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS

n=1,560 respondents who answered



< 1 Year	1-2 Years	2-3 Years	3 Years+
42%	13%	9%	36%

PRIMARY CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

n=1,438 respondents who answered



Job Loss/
Income

22%



Household
Loss/Breakup

28%



Health
Issues

38%



Eviction/Rent
Increase

50%

DISABILITY BENEFITS

n=1,066 Adults w/ Disabilities

Receiving
Benefits
26%



Not Receiving
Benefits
74%

HOMELESS HISTORY

n=1,571 respondents

First Time
Homeless
49%



More Than One
Episode
51%

Self Report Disabilities

n=1,421 Adults

Any
Disability



75%

Chronic
Health Issues



40%

Physical
Disability



36%

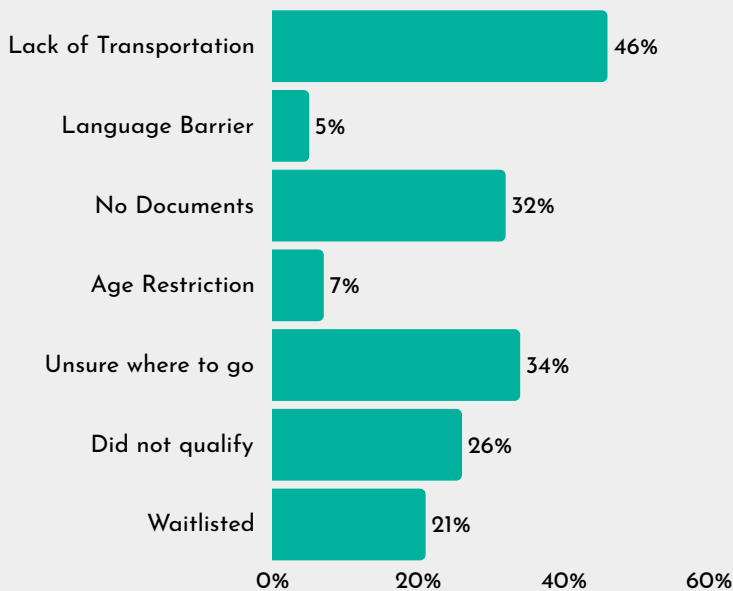
Developmental
Disability



17%

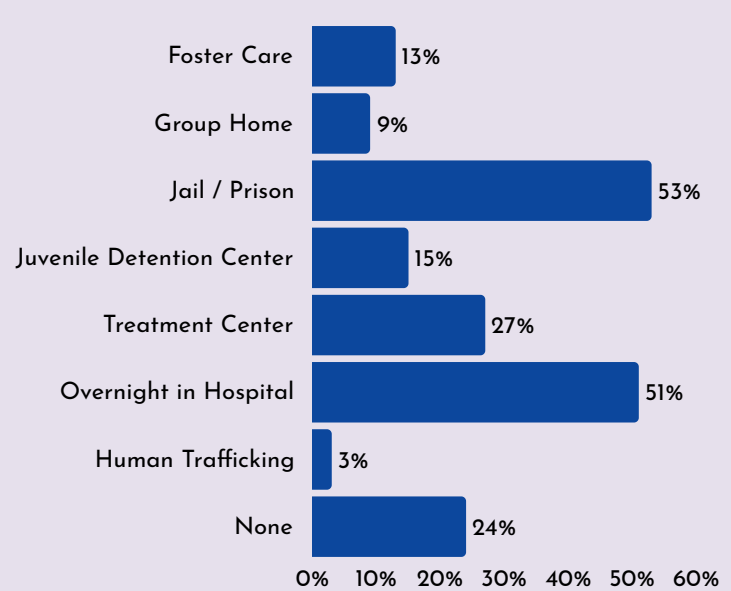
BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES*

n=513 respondents who answered



PRIOR HISTORY*

n=1,426 respondents who answered



*Please note the survey question asked gave participants the option to select more than one answer. Percentages will not add up to 100