



## **2023 HAWAI'I COUNTY POINT IN TIME COUNT TOPLINE REPORT**

### **OVERVIEW**

#### **What is the Point in Time Count?**

The 2023 PIT represents the best available data to estimate one-day homelessness within the rural counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i on the night of January 22, 2023. The estimate adheres to the federal definition of homelessness which includes individuals and families residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, and persons identified as sleeping and living in an unsheltered location on the night of the count. The count is neither a measure of housing stability among people residing in housing nor a measure of the conditions of such housing and the general housing environment. HUD requires BTG to produce an unduplicated estimate of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on a one-day point-in-time conducted during the last 10 days of January. The count is a one-day snapshot of homelessness.

The main objective during this year's count was to obtain a reliable estimate of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and families. The count helps to assess current levels of homelessness by household type, provide estimates for levels of veteran, chronic, unaccompanied youth, and parenting youth homelessness, and measure the prevalence of other underlying causes of homelessness such as mental health and substance use disabilities. Each year, PIT reporting is an integral part of local and national planning and serves to support policy and resource allocation decisions.

Hawai'i's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) was utilized to extract most of the sheltered data needed for this report and continues to serve as the repository for the surveys collected during the unsheltered canvassing. The HMIS is a centralized database used to record services rendered to homeless individuals by homeless service providers throughout BTG. Service providers receiving federal, state, or county funding participate in the HMIS as required. Some privately funded agencies voluntarily use the HMIS due to its reporting capabilities.

To ensure that sheltered client data was accurate, administrators contacted emergency and transitional shelter providers leading up to the count and confirmed that all clients sleeping in their facilities on the night of the count had active HMIS enrollment records. Domestic violence shelters not participating in the HMIS were contacted individually and asked to complete a manual survey form for each of their shelter projects.

For the unsheltered component, BTG implemented a multi-day canvassing effort in 2023. This encompassed a five-day physical count that occurred between Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> and Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>. Field staff and volunteers asked all individuals appearing or known to be homeless during this period, “Where did you sleep this past Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>?” to help ensure that those counted were living in places not meant for human habitation on the night of the count. In 2023, Hawai`i Island included three new descriptive questions on the Single and Head of Household surveys. These questions solicited information from clients relating to criminal history, emergency room utilization, and what services could be provided to assist in ending their homelessness. Responses to these questions are detailed more extensively in the “Hawai`i Additional Unsheltered Questions” section of this report. BTG continued to collect geolocation data based on the site of the interview. This data was analyzed and used to create Tableau visualizations comparing PIT data from 2015 forward. These Tableau charts are intended to accompany the tables presented in this report and can be found on the BTG website here: [BTG PIT Count Tableau Dashboards, 2015-2023](#).

The unsheltered survey form is largely based on HUD-defined data collection. All surveys collected during the count were reviewed, entered in the PIT module of the HMIS, unduplicated, and analyzed to obtain the final statistics included in this report. The final unsheltered survey forms along with other PIT resources can be accessed from the BTG website. The following unsheltered surveys were not included in the final unsheltered tally:

- Clients who reported living in a sheltered situation on the night of January 22, 2023
- Duplicate surveys or records that were already counted in the sheltered component

Stakeholders, regional leaders, homeless service providers, and volunteers attended several planning meetings and virtual training leading up to the PIT. The purpose was to convey the count’s methodology to all involved, provide background and instructions, and to answer any questions regarding the surveys used during the unsheltered count.

Field staff were composed of team members from service agencies that regularly perform outreach to unsheltered homeless individuals. Survey teams were assigned to familiar regions to ensure that many of the high-density areas frequented by unsheltered homeless were surveyed. Skilled outreach staff familiar with specific geographic areas and known to individuals experiencing homelessness are more likely to obtain accurate survey responses. Service-based locations, such as food pantries or drop-in centers were also covered extensively during the count to reach additional unsheltered homeless.

## **HAWAI`I COUNTY STATISTICS AND TRENDS**

Table 1 summarizes the total number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless for Hawai`i Island over the last six years. An unsheltered count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The table presents sheltered, unsheltered, and total homelessness each year. Individual and family homelessness is broken out within each component to detail differences from year to year between these key population groups. Charts identifying trends in

homelessness for Hawai'i Island can be viewed from the dashboards link presented in the Overview section.

Hawai'i County saw an overall increase in homelessness of 167 persons. Sheltered homelessness decreased slightly by four people. While unsheltered homelessness increased by 171 people.

The estimated total number of homeless families was 55, eleven fewer than in 2022. There were 40 sheltered families identified, eight fewer families than in 2022. Unsheltered family homelessness decreased by three families.

**Table 1: Hawai'i Island Summary, 2018-2023**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Sheltered</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>279</b>
Individuals	76	74	117	109	88	125
Fam Individuals	124	169	159	118	195	154
Adults	46	68	76	48	79	66
Children	78	101	83	70	116	88
Families	33	41	46	32	48	40
All Households	109	113	160	138	136	164
<b>Unsheltered</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>725</b>
Individuals	445	385	436	NA	496	670
Fam Individuals	224	62	85	NA	58	55
Adults	102	27	36	NA	25	25
Children	122	35	49	NA	33	30
Families	54	14	22	NA	18	15
All Households	440	374	415	NA	483	661
<b>Total</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>1,004</b>
Individuals	521	459	553	NA	584	795
Fam Individuals	348	231	244	NA	253	209
Adults	148	95	112	NA	104	91
Children	200	136	132	NA	149	118
Families	87	55	68	NA	66	55
All Households	549	487	575	NA	619	825

## Regional Summary

### Hawai'i Island Unsheltered Homelessness

Table 2 presents data on Hawai'i County's unsheltered homelessness over five of the last six years. The nine regions identified have remained consistent over the years presented. The total number of households increased by 178 from 2022 to 2023 PIT, however, unsheltered family households decreased by three households, or 17 percent. Over the six-year period from 2018-2023 there has been a 72 percent reduction in the number of unsheltered family households.

**Table 2: Hawai'i Island Unsheltered Homeless Households by Region, 2018-2023**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Indiv. Households</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>646</b>
1: North Kohala	6	2	0	NA	0	3
2: Hamakua	17	6	18	NA	6	21
3: North Hilo	2	0	1	NA	16	2
4: South Hilo	124	136	169	NA	229	290
5: Puna	44	16	62	NA	33	60
6: Ka`u	30	23	11	NA	12	9
7: South Kona	9	13	1	NA	22	16
8: North Kona	129	139	115	NA	134	223
9: South Kohala	25	25	16	NA	13	22
<b>Family Households</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>
1: North Kohala	0	0	0	NA	1	0
2: Hamakua	1	0	0	NA	0	1
3: North Hilo	0	0	1	NA	0	0
4: South Hilo	8	3	6	NA	5	4
5: Puna	9	3	5	NA	5	2
6: Ka`u	23	4	3	NA	0	1
7: South Kona	2	0	1	NA	0	1
8: North Kona	7	1	6	NA	7	5
9: South Kohala	4	3	0	NA	0	1
<b>All Households</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>661</b>
1: North Kohala	6	2	0	NA	1	3
2: Hamakua	18	6	18	NA	6	22
3: North Hilo	2	0	2	NA	16	2
4: South Hilo	132	139	175	NA	234	294
5: Puna	53	19	67	NA	38	62
6: Ka`u	53	27	14	NA	12	10
7: South Kona	11	13	2	NA	22	17
8: North Kona	136	140	121	NA	141	228
9: South Kohala	29	28	16	NA	13	23

## Hawai`i Island Additional Unsheltered Questions

In 2023, Hawai`i island collected data on five additional questions through unsheltered canvassing. The following questions were included on the Single and Head of Household unsheltered survey forms and were only administered on Hawai`i island.

- *Did you move to Hawai`i within the past year?*
- *What led to your current living situation?*
- *Have you been arrested in the last year?*
- *How many times have you been to the emergency room in the past year?*
- *What can we do to help you end your homelessness?*

Table 9 presents response data from the question “*Did you Move to Hawai`i within the past year?*”. Of the 661 households surveyed, 552 responded (84%), with 48 of the 552 (9%) stating that they had moved to Hawai`i within the past year. Two of the 48 “yes” responses came from family households, while the remaining 46 came from individual households. Tables 10 through 12 present data for households responding “yes” to the initial question.

**Table 3: Did you move to Hawai`i within the past year?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
Yes	2	46	48
No	12	492	504
Unknown/Refused	1	108	109
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>661</b>

**Table 4: If yes, what State or Country did you come from?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
<b>State Abbreviation</b>			
AK	1	3	4
AZ		2	2
AR		2	2
CA		7	7
CO		3	3
FL		3	3
IL		1	1
IA		1	1
IN		1	1
MA		1	1
MD		1	1
MI		1	1
NM		1	1
OH		2	2
OR	1	4	5
TX		1	1
WA		2	2
WY		1	1
Unknown/Refused		3	3
<b>Foreign Country</b>			
Canada		3	3
Micronesia		3	3
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>

Of the 48 households that moved to Hawai'i within the past year, 42 came from states, while six moved from either Canada or Micronesia. Of the 42 state responses, the most came from California.

One third, or 16 of the 48 households that reported moving to Hawai'i within the past year indicated that they would be interested in returning to their home state or country. This data is presented in the following table.

**Table 5: If yes, are you interested in returning home?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
Yes		16	16
No	2	30	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>

For the 48 households that arrived within the last year, Table 12 displays data on why they moved to Hawai'i.

**Table 6: If yes, why did you come to Hawai'i?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
Came for work/trade living arrangement		6	6
Came for the weather		17	17
To be with family or friends and it didn't work out		7	7
Other reason	2	16	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>

Table 7 presents data from the survey question “*What led to your current living situation?*”. This question allowed for only one selection, intended to be the primary reason that each household was living unsheltered. Of the 661 households surveyed, 546 responded (83%). The most prevalent response leading to homelessness was a family or relationship conflict, followed by inability to pay rent. Excluding the unknown or refused responses, these two reasons comprised 41 percent of the total (226 of 546 responses).

**Table 7: What led to your current living situation?**

Primary Reason	Fam HH	Ind HH	Total	% of Total
COVID-19	1	25	26	3.9%
Disability (mental/addiction/physical)	0	66	66	10.0%
Evicted from my home	3	51	54	8.2%
Family/Relationship Conflict	5	117	122	18.5%
Fleeing from Domestic Violence	0	10	10	1.5%
Kilauea Eruption	0	4	4	0.6%
Lost home due to fire	1	4	5	0.8%
Lost my job, unable to secure work	0	24	24	3.6%
Mauna Loa eruption	0	0	0	0.0%
Medical Emergency	0	3	3	0.5%
Recently released from incarceration	1	15	16	2.4%
Unable to afford rent	1	103	104	15.7%

Unable to secure affordable housing	0	14	14	2.1%
Other reason	1	97	98	14.8%
Unknown/Refused	2	113	115	17.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 8 presents response data from the question “*Have you been arrested in the last year?*” Of the 661 households surveyed, 546 provided responses (83%), with 142 of the 546 (26%) stating that they had been arrested in the last year. In terms of individual households, 139 of the 532 responding (26%) indicated that they had been arrested in the last year. Tables 15 and 16 present data for households responding “yes” to the initial question. Table 15 groups the response data into three categories, as this conditional question was not categorized on the survey forms. Table 17 presents data from the survey question “How many times have you been to the emergency room in the past year?”

**Table 8: Have you been arrested in the last year?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
Yes	3	139	142
No	11	393	404
Unknown/Refused	1	114	115
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>661</b>

**Table 9: If yes, how many times?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
1 or 2 times	2	96	98
3 to 5 times	1	34	35
6 or more times	0	9	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>142</b>

**Table 10: If yes, how many days in the past year have you been in jail?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
30 days or less	2	117	119
More than 30 days	1	22	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>142</b>

**Table 11: How many times have you been to the emergency room in the past year?**

Response	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
None	8	417	425
1 or 2 times	6	166	172
3 to 5 times	0	48	48
More than 5 times	1	15	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>661</b>

Table 12 presents data from the survey question “*What can we do to help you end your homelessness?*”. This question allowed for multiple response selections intended to convey data on what services can be applied to assist in resolving the household’s unsheltered homelessness. The percentage of total for each service line is based on 661 total households. As expected, securing housing, and obtaining more money or rental assistance dominate the responses.

**Table 12: What can we do to help you end your homelessness?**

Homeless Service	Fam HH	Ind HH	Total	% of HHs
Childcare	2	2	4	0.6%
Documents (Replace lost/stolen)	3	170	173	26.2%
Employment	1	70	71	10.7%
Legal aid	0	20	20	3.0%
Medical Insurance	2	44	46	7.0%
Money/Rent assistance	7	266	273	41.3%
Need medical care	0	28	28	4.2%
Reconnect with family to go home	0	22	22	3.3%
Securing housing	10	350	360	54.5%
Treatment program	2	24	26	3.9%
Other (specify)	3	61	64	9.7%
Unknown/Refused	1	145	146	22.1%

## **Discussion of Results**

Hawai'i County continues to make progress in reducing the number of families experiencing homelessness, especially unsheltered homelessness. Slightly under 21% of all people experiencing homelessness are members of a homeless family, either a parent or child. Children as a percentage of the total people experiencing homelessness, dropped to just under 12%. The potential for long term negative impacts to children who experience homelessness is well documented. Impacts may include chronic health issues, reduced likelihood of completing highschool, increased likelihood of justice involvement, and increased risk for adult poverty and homelessness. Reducing family and child homelessness is imperative to creating a community in which homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

In the last 24 months the County of Hawai'i has seen housing inventories shrink and rental cost climb significantly. Additionally, we have seen the economic quality for the majority of Hawai'i Island residents decline. According to the 2022 ALICE Report published by the Aloha United Way, 51% of all households in Hawai'i County fall below the ALICE threshold. In other words, 51% of Households do not have sufficient income to cover the basics of Rent, Food, Transportation, Healthcare, Childcare, Cell Phone, and taxes. Worse, 18% of households are at or below the Federal Poverty line. Additionally, some of the hardest hit households are those of Native Hawaiians, as well as families with young children. Clearly, housing for the majority of Hawai'i residents is becoming unattainable.

Not surprisingly, 2023 saw a significant increase in individuals — people without children in the household — experiencing homelessness. Another contributing factor to the increase in homelessness includes 46 individuals who were identified as homeless in the PIT count and reported that they moved to Hawai'i within the last year. Additionally in the top three reasons



individuals reported for falling into homelessness included family/relationship conflict, unable to afford rent, and disabilities.

**Looking ahead in Hawai'i County:**

The County of Hawai'i has recently invested financial resources for the first time, allocating 75% of real property tax collections for homes valued at or above \$2million or more to be resourced to fund homeless services and housing. County anticipates executing new contracts with providers to expand services beginning May 2023. In addition, the County also appropriated \$9 million in fiscal year 2022-23 to facilitate programs that support affordable housing production. We anticipate the County increasing affordable housing with these additional resources.

Work to prepare the site in North Kona for a new emergency shelter for homeless individuals and couples — Kukuiola Assessment Center and Emergency Shelter — has begun. Vertical construction of Phase 1 of this multi-phase project is expected to begin in early 2024. These emergency shelter beds accompanied by the construction of affordable housing (with supports) can help reduce the number of individuals and couples experiencing homelessness.

Hawai'i County received 110 Emergency Housing Vouchers as part of the Federal Government's response to the housing disruption caused by COVID-19. These Vouchers will ensure that more households will have the long-term housing support they need after a period of homelessness. Over half of the housing vouchers are currently providing housing opportunities for housing stability.

Hawai'i County providers successfully pursued and were awarded \$3 million in HUD funding to expand homeless outreach services for the next three years and to increase permanent supportive housing by an additional thirteen units. Providers are anxiously awaiting the execution of these contracts later this year.

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## **COMMUNITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS**

While BTG's focus remains on housing the houseless, this unprecedented pandemic compels us to ramp up preventative measures further. Without intentional resources on this front, the resulting impact could exacerbate homelessness in our community.

BTG endorses the following actions:

**1. BUILD, ACQUIRE, AND PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Hawai'i must continue to dedicate itself to increasing the supply of housing and creating new housing opportunities. BTG will continue to advocate for the prioritization of funding to support an increase in permanent housing. Without increasing affordable housing opportunities, the flow of individuals moving into housing becomes stagnant and creates longer stays at shelters.

Strengthen landlord incentives to increase participation by property owners in subsidized housing programs, which includes but is not limited to a sign-up bonus for first-time or returning landlords and financial protections for repair costs of tenant-caused property damage when the repair costs exceed the tenant's security deposit.

2. **INCREASE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAMS**

It is critical to prevent the loss of housing among people who are living in permanent supportive housing. For chronically homeless individuals (those with a disability and long history of homelessness), stable housing and supportive services are the foundation for stability. Permanent supportive housing programs are project-based, clustered, or scattered site permanent housing linked with supportive services that help residents sustain housing. The Permanent Housing Program is the right intervention for persons with the deepest needs by providing long-term housing stability through rental assistance and/or supportive services.

3. **MAINTAIN RAPID RE-HOUSING (RRH) & LONG TERM RENT SUBSIDY PROGRAMS**

Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families exit homelessness quickly and return to permanent housing by providing three core program activities including housing identification, time-limited financial assistance, and housing-based case management services.

In addition to shallow subsidies like Rapid re-Housing, it is critical that long-term rental subsidy programs be expanded alongside increases in affordable housing units. In 2021, the U.S Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) released two hundred fourteen (214) new Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) on the neighbor islands. We encourage our local Public Housing Agency to continue to apply for additional EHV vouchers and other long-term rental subsidy funding.

4. **EXPAND HOMELESS PREVENTION & DIVERSION STRATEGIES**

We must strengthen practices and increase system capacity to divert families from entering into homelessness. Homeless prevention resources are critical for households who may need some assistance as they struggle to remain housed. Many households will continue to need access to rent, mortgage, and utility assistance throughout the long and uncertain COVID economic recovery.

5. **EXPAND AND ENHANCE STREET OUTREACH**

Individuals experiencing homelessness are at greater risk of exposure to a variety of infectious diseases including influenza and COVID-19. Street Outreach staff are often the only connection to high-risk persons living in homeless encampments or places not meant for human habitation across the island. Health care professionals in partnership with

Housing Navigators must be deployed as “Street Medicine Teams” to encampments to assess, treat and educate patients in need of medical assistance, and provide follow-up evaluation and care as needed, delivering care directly to them in their own environment. It is the first essential step in achieving higher levels of medical, mental health, and social care and towards a pathway to securing housing and residential stability.