



2023 KAUA'I COUNTY POINT IN TIME COUNT TOPLINE REPORT

OVERVIEW

Every January, counties across the nation carry out the Homeless Point In Time (PIT) Count in their respective jurisdictions. The PIT Count is an annual survey of people experiencing homelessness on a given night.

Bridging the Gap (BTG), which represents Hawai'i County, Maui County and Kaua'i County, is the Neighbor Island's Continuum of Care (CoC). As the Hawaii balance-of-state CoC, BTG serves as a local planning body designed to promote a community-wide commitment to end homelessness. In response to BTG's responsibility and dedication to achieve this goal, autonomous PIT Counts are conducted in each county. Data is then analyzed and aggregated for total rural county results. The major findings of the jurisdiction's PIT Count are required and reported in the annual funding application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

This year, teams on Kaua'i canvassed parks, beaches, and many other areas, asking people "Where did you sleep on January 22nd?" This federally mandated survey seeks to count anyone who slept on the street, in a car, or in other areas not meant for human habitation. Sheltered homeless are counted through data collected from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for January 22nd. While the PIT Count does not capture every person experiencing homelessness, it does provide a one-night snapshot of homelessness on Kaua'i. The collected data is compared county to county and year to year to help stakeholders understand homelessness in their districts.

KAUAI COUNTY STATISTICS AND TRENDS

Table 1 summarizes the total number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless for Kaua'i over the last five 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.

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Table 1: Kaua'i Sheltered and Unsheltered Summary, 2019-2023

| | Sheltered | | Unsheltered | | Total Sheltered & Unsheltered on Kaua'i |
|------|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---|
| | # | % | # | % | |
| 2023 | 58 | 12% | 430 | 88% | 488 |
| 2022 | 40 | 9% | 404 | 91% | 444 |
| 2021 | 63 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2020 | 55 | 13% | 369 | 87% | 424 |
| 2019 | 95 | 21% | 348 | 79% | 443 |

Sheltered homelessness rose to 58 people, an increase of 45% compared to the 40 sheltered in 2022. Unsheltered homelessness also increased by 6% to 430 people compared to last year. Unsheltered homelessness among single individuals decreased by 23 people compared to 2022, however, the total number of unsheltered homeless families nearly doubled from last year.

Table 2: 2023 Kaua'i Sheltered and Unsheltered Family Configuration Summary

| | Sheltered | | Unsheltered | | Total Sheltered & Unsheltered on Kaua'i |
|--------------------|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|---|
| | # | % | # | % | |
| Single Individuals | 20 | 6% | 334 | 94% | 354 |
| Family Individuals | 38 | 28.4% | 96 | 71.6% | 134 |
| Adults | 15 | 26.3% | 42 | 73.7% | 57 |
| Children | 23 | 29.9% | 54 | 70.1% | 77 |
| All Individuals | 58 | 11.9% | 430 | 88.1% | 488 |
| Family Households | 10 | 27% | 27 | 73% | 37 |

Unsheltered homelessness among single individuals was 334, a decrease by 23 people compared to 357 counted in 2022, however, the total number of unsheltered homeless families increased to 27 from the 15 counted last year. Some issues contributing to this increase include housing displacement or the loss of housing. The overall shortage of housing, rentals going off market due to sales, the end of the eviction moratorium and landlords not accepting housing assistance and subsidy programs also contributed to families becoming homeless.

Shelter Capacity – In July 2022, improvements to increase capacity were completed at Kaua'i's primary emergency shelter. The improvement project eliminated aging and problematic septic systems, reducing future maintenance costs and protecting groundwater integrity by connecting the shelter facility to the municipal wastewater system. The project also included improvements made to transitional housing units and ADA upgrades.

Kaua'i Homeless Subpopulations

Table 3: Kaua'i Sheltered and Unsheltered Veteran Summary, 2019-2023

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Emergency Shelter | | | | | |
| Veterans | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Veteran Families | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Veteran Family Individuals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Transitional Housing | | | | | |
| Veterans | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Veteran Families | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Veteran Family Individuals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unsheltered | | | | | |
| Veterans | 20 | 20 | N/A | 33 | 19 |
| Veteran Families | 0 | 0 | N/A | 1 | 0 |
| Veteran Family Individuals | 0 | 0 | N/A | 3 | 0 |

This table shows the reductions in both sheltered and unsheltered subpopulations of the homeless veterans that self-identified. The sheltered statistics are segregated by emergency and transitional project types. Veteran support services on Kaua'i have been actively engaged with participants and are able to offer emergency bed spaces, rental assistance, homeless prevention, and housing subsidy programs for permanent housing.

Table 4: Kaua'i Sheltered and Unsheltered Configuration of Serious Mental Illness and Chronic Substance Use, 2019-2023

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Emergency Shelter | | | | | |
| Serious Mental Illness | 11 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| Chronic Substance Use | 8 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| Transitional Housing | | | | | |
| Serious Mental Illness | 9 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Chronic Substance Use | 14 | 10 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| Unsheltered | | | | | |
| Serious Mental Illness | 64 | 82 | N/A | 97 | 119 |
| Chronic Substance Use | 107 | 87 | N/A | 75 | 96 |
| Total by Subpopulation | | | | | |
| Serious Mental Illness | 84 | 93 | N/A | 100 | 121 |
| Chronic Substance Use | 129 | 102 | N/A | 79 | 102 |

Kaua'i continues to collect data on the subpopulation above. These statistics, based on adults surveyed, reveal a steady increase in serious mental illness and chronic substance use among the groups total over the past five years.

This growing aspect provides additional strain among homeless service providers. Mental illness and substance use supports are limited and require specific and focused attention. Currently, the

weight of these issues often falls upon street outreach providers to navigate. The expansion of specialized outreach providing mental health case management and substance use support is greatly needed.

Regional Summary

Table 5: Kaua'i Unsheltered Individuals and Families by Zone, 2018-2023.

An unsheltered count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Individuals | 131 | 286 | 269 | 357 | 334 |
| 1: West | 11 | 75 | 62 | 61 | 68 |
| 2: South | 6 | 2 | 5 | 17 | 21 |
| 3: South Central | 68 | 118 | 107 | 122 | 113 |
| 4: East | 36 | 41 | 64 | 122 | 104 |
| 5: North | 10 | 50 | 31 | 35 | 28 |
| Family Individuals | 56 | 62 | 100 | 47 | 96 |
| 1: West | 9 | 27 | 53 | 13 | 20 |
| 2: South | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| 3: South Central | 27 | 20 | 32 | 17 | 22 |
| 4: East | 20 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 30 |
| 5: North | 0 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 15 |
| All Individuals | 187 | 348 | 369 | 404 | 430 |
| 1: West | 20 | 102 | 115 | 74 | 88 |
| 2: South | 6 | 4 | 5 | 17 | 30 |
| 3: South Central | 95 | 138 | 139 | 139 | 135 |
| 4: East | 56 | 44 | 70 | 131 | 134 |
| 5: North | 10 | 60 | 40 | 43 | 43 |

Kaua'i's five regions have stayed consistent over the years presented. South central and east regions have more access to resources including social services, jobs, government services and necessary goods. Kaua'i's south and north zone is less populated, likely due to a lack of service infrastructure and a high number of resorts. Individual homelessness is broken down in this table and presents single individuals and family individuals in each region over the past five years for comparison. Although we saw a decrease in single individuals from 357 in 2022 to 334 in 2023 there was a subsequent increase in family individuals from 47 in 2022 to 96 in 2023. The rise in family homelessness was the increase of 12 families over this period, encompassing 49 family individuals.

TABLE 6: Non-active Unsheltered persons surveyed vs. Active HMIS Outreach Clients

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|---|---------------|
| Total number surveyed in 2023 Unsheltered PIT | 430 |
| Number surveyed w/o an active HMIS outreach enrollment | 297 |
| Number surveyed w/an active HMIS outreach enrollment | 133 |
| Unduplicated clients w/an active HMIS outreach enrollment | 192 |
| Clients w/an active HMIS outreach enrollment not surveyed | 59 |

This table provides an estimate for the number of clients that were missed in this year’s unsheltered canvassing. There were a total of 192 distinct clients that were active in BTG’s HMIS Street Outreach project as of the PIT date. Of these clients, 133 were found in the unsheltered count this year. This implies that 59 clients were not surveyed.

The table also displays a breakdown of 430 clients identified in the unsheltered count. Of the 430 unsheltered clients, 297 or 69% were not actively enrolled in an HMIS street outreach project as of the PIT date, implying that 133 clients were actively enrolled and receiving outreach services as of this date.

This adequately displays the need for increase in Kaua'i’s current outreach, its services and its funding. Additional support services for higher levels of medical, mental health, and social care could greatly increase the reach and effectiveness of the street outreach program we have in place.

COMMUNITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

While BTG’s focus remains on housing the houseless, we are compelled to expand and increase our preventative measures. Without intentional resources on this front, the resulting impact could exacerbate homelessness in our community.

BTG endorses the following actions:

1. BUILD, ACQUIRE, AND EXPAND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Hawai’i must continue to dedicate itself to increasing the supply of housing and creating new housing opportunities. We will continue to advocate for the prioritization of funding to support an increase in permanent housing. Without increasing affordable housing opportunities, the flow becomes stagnant and creates a longer length of homelessness.

In 2023, the County of Kaua'i and other developers have plans to break ground on over 400 units of various types including workforce rental apartments, senior housing, and single-family homes. Another supportive housing project modeled after the current Ohana Zone project, Kealaula on Pua Loke, will be built in the Lima Ola subdivision in Ele’ele on the west side of the island.

The Kaua'i Community Alliance (KCA) continues to work with developers and management companies to increase dedicated units for families experiencing homelessness through the CoC's Coordinated Entry System (CES).

KCA will continue to support these projects and advocate for prioritization of funding.

2. INCREASE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAMS

It is critical to prevent the loss of housing among people who are living in permanent supportive housing (PSH). 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. This housing program is the appropriate intervention for persons with the greatest needs where they may remain in this program indefinitely with temporary or long-term rental assistance, intense housing case management and supportive services.

It is essential to expand the supply of housing and to strengthen practices to educate housing providers that program participants will have deep needs. Needs are met with weekly meetings that may be combined with face-to-face meetings and phone calls. Early intervention, trust building, and communication are critical factors in keeping residents housed.

Kaua'i has one permanent supportive housing project that can service 10 chronically homeless individuals. Although Kaua'i has the smallest representation of PSH beds of the three counties that make up BTG, our need is growing.

Enhancements for PSH should include reviewing the existing permanent supportive housing program relative to their contractual service expectations, filling existing gaps, providing support and expanding permanent supportive housing funding for additional bed spaces.

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

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) 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. Kaua'i's current RRH programs provide homeless individuals with these services for a sustainable and secure future in housing. RRH programs utilizing the HMIS are assigned clients to house through the Coordinated Entry System (CES).

The continuity of Kaua'i's CES and alignment with the BTG CES policies and procedures must be maintained to continue providing a well-coordinated and efficient community system that assures homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring.

In 2022, Kaua'i's Ohana Zone supportive housing project, Kealaula on Pua Loke, had 17 new households move in, including 22 children. Also in 2023, a 26-unit supportive housing project will break ground in the Lima Ola subdivision in Ele'ele on the westside of the island. Like Pua Loke, this project will include on-site case management through a local non-profit and house the currently homeless with a priority for families with minor children and kupuna.

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. It is critical for these types of long-term rent subsidies to continue along with an increase in affordable rental housing units. Twenty-eight (28) EHV were allocated to the Kaua'i County Housing Agency. These vouchers are referred from the CES system and fall into two categories: formerly homeless and literally homeless. Local non-profit agencies assist clients with applications, housing search, and ongoing housing-based case management services. At the end of 2022, sixteen (16) vouchers were leased up and being utilized.

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 to assist households who may need assistance. In our current state of economic recovery, many households on Kaua'i continue to need access to rent, mortgage, and utility assistance including arrears, and short-term and medium-term rent assistance. Other issues contributing to housing displacement include, but are not limited to, Hawaii's high cost of living (rent, food, gas and more), an overall shortage of housing, rentals going off market due to sales, the end of eviction moratoriums and landlords not accepting housing assistance and subsidy programs. In many cases, the increase in supply prices and disruption of supply chains has delayed new construction.

Eviction-diversion mediation programs have yielded success when used. By having a third party assist the landlord and tenant with communication and problem solving, many who engaged with these programs found success and remained housed. A Housing Navigator program began its pilot phase in 2022 assisting applicants searching for affordable rental units, primarily those with government rental assistance.

At the onset of the pandemic, a statewide Rent Relief Housing Assistance Program (RRHAP) along with other on island programs were launched to prevent homelessness due to the effects of the shutdown, where many lost incomes and were unable to pay their rent, mortgage, and utilities. Efforts continued as the County of Kaua'i's Coronavirus Rental and Utility Assistance Program (CRUA) began assisting households that had been impacted, directly or indirectly, by the COVID-19 pandemic with rent and utilities. Over the course of the program, CRUA distributed just over \$30 million to Kaua'i households. In 2022, CRUA issued \$7.8 million in rent and utility assistance for 1207 households.

5. EXPAND AND ENHANCE STREET OUTREACH

Outreach service providers on Kaua'i are increasing their efforts to reach and provide direct contact with individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Given the volume of unsheltered homeless found this year and the state and federal initiatives to reduce unsheltered homelessness, outreach services can be enhanced by reviewing existing street outreach programs relative to their service contractual expectations, filling gaps in outreach service delivery and expanding street outreach funding to deliver more of the housing-focused outreach services that are needed.

Street Outreach staff are often the only connection to high-risk persons living in encampments or places not meant for human habitation across the island. 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. Individuals experiencing homelessness are at greater risk of exposure to a variety of infectious diseases including staph infections, influenza and COVID-19. Further funding is needed to increase street medicine and wound care for the homeless community of Kaua'i.

Data from the last five years shows an increasing need for mental health services and substance abuse support amongst the unsheltered population. These challenges are nuanced and require specific and focused attention. Currently, the weight of these issues often falls upon street outreach providers to navigate. Specialized outreach providing mental health case management and substance use support is essential.

Local CoC Kaua'i Community Alliance (KCA) hosts a monthly outreach meeting with providers to communicate about general updates, new encampments, upcoming cleanups and partnerships. Upwards of 6 organizations do consistent daily or weekly outreach providing the following: vital documents, pet support, youth services, wound care, hot showers, health services, substance misuse treatment, tobacco cessation, HIV testing, bus passes and sign-up for assistance programs.