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POINT-IN-TIME COUNT SHOWS CONTINUED PROGRESS

As numbers decline again, State and federal funding cuts loom

The Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) released results today of the 2025 Homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, demonstrating a significant drop in individuals experiencing homelessness to the lowest number in the count's history.

The 2025 PIT Count identified 1,473 people experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County, a 20 percent reduction compared to 2024. While this decline signals further progress among some populations, the report reveals persistent local challenges in helping people with disabling health conditions secure stable homes.

"The results reflect both our year-over-year progress and the serious work that remains," Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Director Robert Ratner said. "We've reduced the overall number of people experiencing homelessness and see signs of significant progress with youth, working adults, and veterans, populations benefitting from more consistent funding and community support for housing and services. We need similar commitments to see progress among those with disabling health conditions."

The PIT Count is a federally mandated snapshot of individuals and families experiencing homelessness on a single day, using standardized methodology to create a census of homeless individuals in the community. Follow-up surveys are used to develop additional information about the population and the challenges they face. The County's annual survey was conducted January 30th, using 85 volunteers who were previously homeless.

Despite the progress shown in the PIT Count, funding for programs to further reduce homelessness in the community is at risk, including reduction in State Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention grant funding for cities, counties, and continuums of care. Federal budget proposals also include uncertainties, including proposed cuts to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the source of Section 8 funding used to house an estimated 10,000 locals, including seniors, veterans, children and people with disabilities.

Santa Cruz County remains committed to reducing homelessness through strategic partnerships, data-driven planning, and evidence-based interventions. Annual PIT Count data is used to guide policy decisions, secure state and federal funding, and inform the County's efforts to ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

The full report is available at:

<https://housingforhealthpartnership.org/LearningCenter/Point-in-TimeCounts.aspx>.

Key takeaways from the 2025 PIT Count:

- **Historic Drop in Homelessness:** The count revealed the number of individuals experiencing homelessness dropped to the lowest number in the history of the count, with a 20 percent reduction in 2025 compared to 2024.
- **Unsheltered Homelessness Remains High:** While overall numbers declined, 76 percent of individuals experiencing homelessness were unsheltered, residing in places not meant for human habitation.
- **First-Time Homelessness on the Rise:** 40 percent were experiencing homelessness for the first time, up from 30 percent in 2024, highlighting growing economic pressures and rising costs of living.
- **Economic Drivers a Primary Factor:** Loss of employment (18 percent) and high cost of living (15 percent) were leading causes of homelessness, emphasizing the intersection between housing instability and economic factors.
- **Local Roots:** 78 percent of respondents became homeless while already living in Santa Cruz County, reaffirming that homelessness remains a local issue requiring local solutions.
- **Chronic Homelessness is Growing:** Individuals meeting the federal definition of chronic homelessness (disabling health condition and more than one year homeless) now represent 60 percent of the overall count, up from 38 percent in 2024.
- **Health-related Challenges:** 75 percent of survey responders reported having at least one disabling condition, with 54 percent reporting a psychiatric or emotional condition, and 43 percent having a physical disability.

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ABOUT THE HOUSING FOR HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

The Housing for Health Partnership is a collaboration of the County and each city within Santa Cruz County, along with local homelessness service providers. It acts as the federally-designated continuum of care for Santa Cruz County and helps allocate State and federal funding to address homelessness. The County of Santa Cruz serves as lead agency for the H4H Partnership.

For more information, visit our [website](#), [FaceBook page](#), and [Instagram account](#).