



Media Release

July 1, 2024

Council for the Homeless released data from the 2024 Point in Time Count held January 25, 2024. The Point in Time Count is a one-day census of people experiencing homelessness in Clark County, WA. The PIT is mandated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Washington State Department of Commerce.

While the 2024 PIT results point to reductions in homelessness for some demographic groups experiencing homelessness, CFTH leadership urge caution in interpreting the results from one year's numbers. Dale Whitley, CFTH homeless management information system director states, "The value of the PIT is in comparing the results by year over time and looking for long-term trends. Reductions in some metrics within a PIT count can be a positive indicator, but it will take additional future PIT Counts to reveal whether it was the start of a trend."

CFTH also recommends studying the full years' worth of data in their annual Homeless Response System report for 2023 due to be released later in July. The report provides a more complete description of homeless system services, improvements, gaps, and demographics of people in need of assistance.

Key Takeaways from the 2024 Point in Time Count results include:

- The overall number of sheltered plus unsheltered people counted in the 2024 PIT represented a 5% increase from 2023's count. In the 2023 count, the overall increase was 9%.
- Sheltered homelessness increased 11% due to additional bed capacity, and unsheltered homelessness decreased slightly by .4%. This represents the first decrease in an unsheltered count in nine years.
- The number of unsheltered seniors decreased by 33% from 2023. This reflects prioritizing seniors for the Bertha's Place shelters established in late 2022, as well as the beds provided by the Safe Stay shelters.
- Chronically homeless sheltered individuals increased 47% from 2023 while chronically homeless unsheltered individuals decreased by 31%. This reflects an additional 53 beds available among local shelters.
- Rates of unsheltered homelessness in families with children increased 44% with 19 more families counted in 2024 than in 2023.
- Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color continue to be overrepresented in the need for homeless system services. 39% of the people counted during the PIT were people of color. This population makes up only 19% of the Clark County overall population.

The data points to investments in ending homelessness or a lack of resources. For example, unsheltered families remain unsheltered instead of entering a family emergency shelter often because the shelters

are full of families who do not have the financial resources to move out of shelter and into housing. As housing costs continue to increase, Clark County low-income renters struggle to find and maintain housing.

CFTH Executive Director, Sesany Fennie-Jones shares, “The rates of homelessness in Clark County reflect the lack of housing accessible to people with low – and sometimes limited - incomes. There is an increased need for supportive services to help people stabilize and maintain their housing and the need for strategies that target the disproportionate rates of homelessness among people of color compared to white people.

Fennie-Jones continues, “Thankfully, Clark County has multiple jurisdictions and organizations committed to making a difference. Collaboration and increasing resources are key to solving homelessness.”

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