Point in Time Count 2023

Public Presentation

May 2023

ECHO

Outline

- **Point in Time (PIT) Count Overview**: What is the PIT?
- **Point in Time Estimates**: How many people were counted in 2023?
- **Geography of Unsheltered Homelessness**: Where were people living?
- **Subpopulation Analysis**: How have demographic breakdowns changed since 2020?
- **How We're Responding**: What is the System's capacity to house people looking like?

What is the Point in Time (PIT) Count?

What is the Point in Time (PIT) Count?

Purpose:

- To understand the scope, characteristics, and subpopulations of people experiencing homelessness in Austin/Travis County so that funding and services for ending homelessness may be targeted appropriately.

Background:

- The PIT is a biennial count of the Austin/Travis County population experiencing homelessness on a given night.
- Required by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of Continuums of Care (CoC) in each community to receive HUD funding.
- Provides a way for HUD to compare estimates of homelessness across the country.

What is the Point in Time (PIT) Count?

PIT Unsheltered Count Methodology Highlights:

- Conducted January 28, 2023, **3am-8am**.
- Teams divided up into **74 geographic sections**, each led by a team lead.
- Over **700 volunteers** conducted the Count!
- Consists of both interviews and observations.
    - Interviews: People are asked a number of questions about their homelessness and their demographic characteristics.
    - Observations: Volunteers count someone that they are not able to interview.

Sheltered Count:

The sheltered count relies on data entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) by service providers on people staying in shelter on the same night of the unsheltered count.

Point in Time Count, 2023

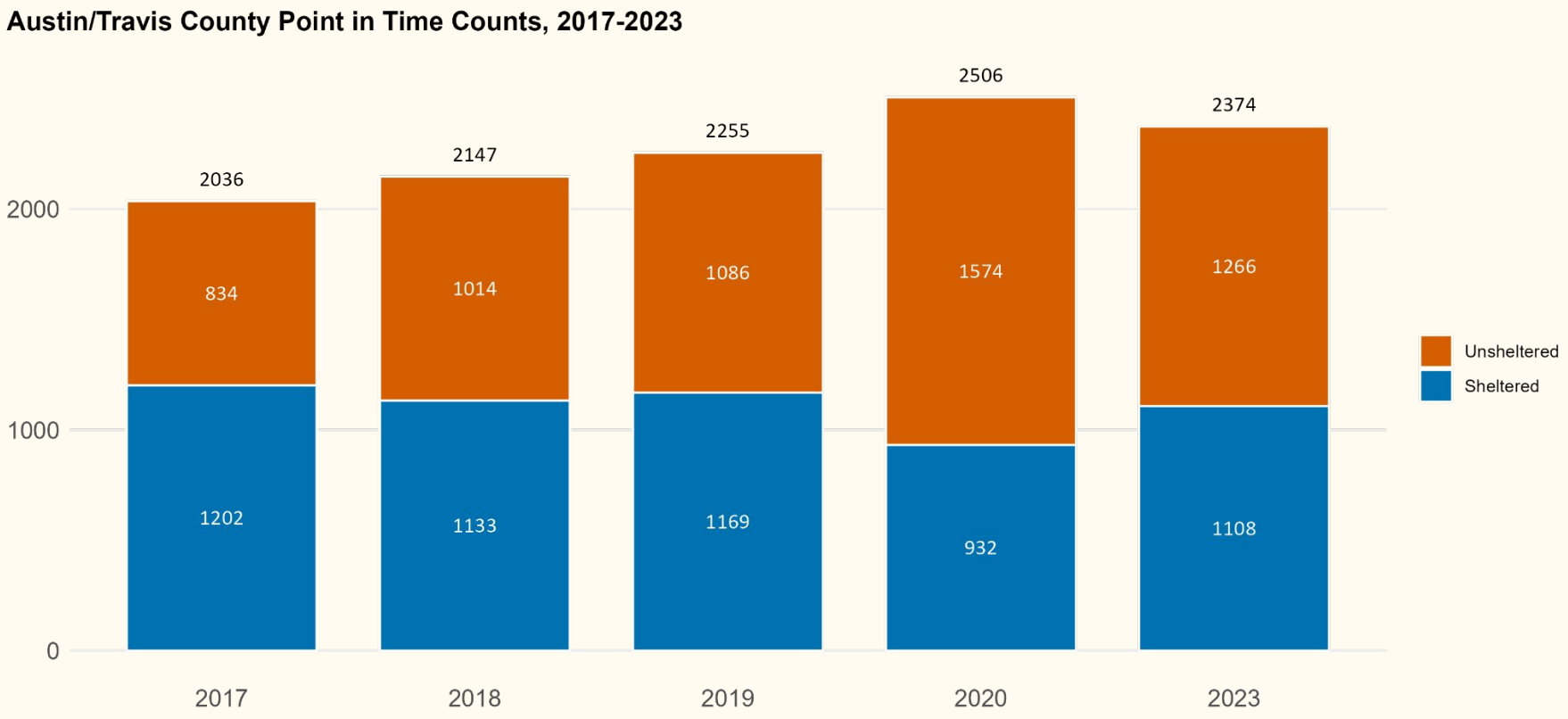
PIT 2023 Date and Location

- January 28, 2023
- Travis County, TX

Note:

- PIT Counts were not conducted in 2021 and 2022 due to Covid-19.

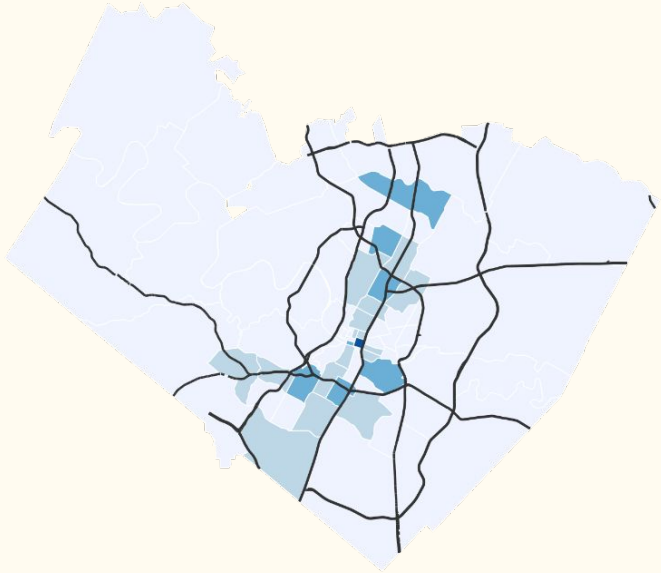
Point in Time Count, Since 2017



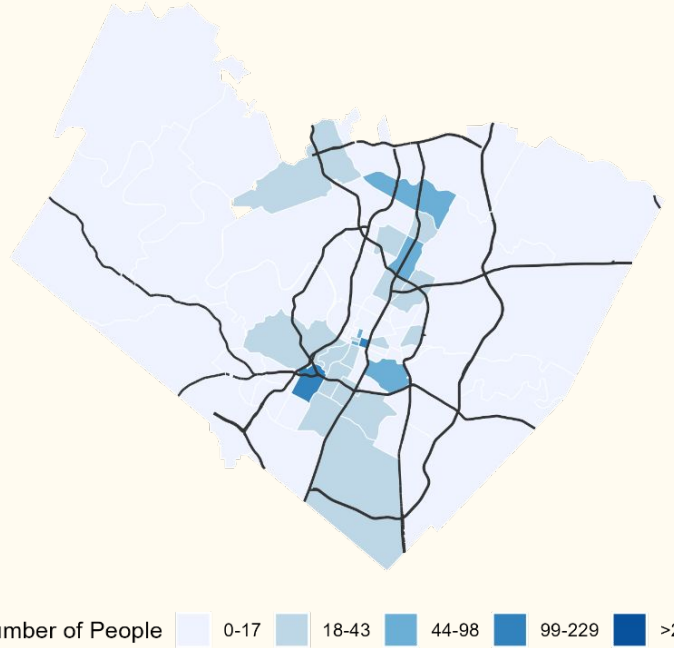
Geographic Distribution of Unsheltered Homelessness

Geographic Distribution by PIT Section

PIT Count 2020



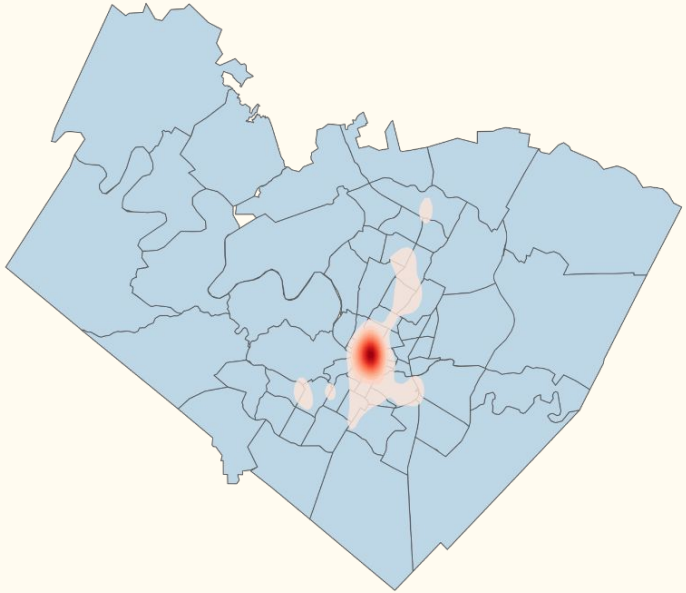
PIT Count 2023



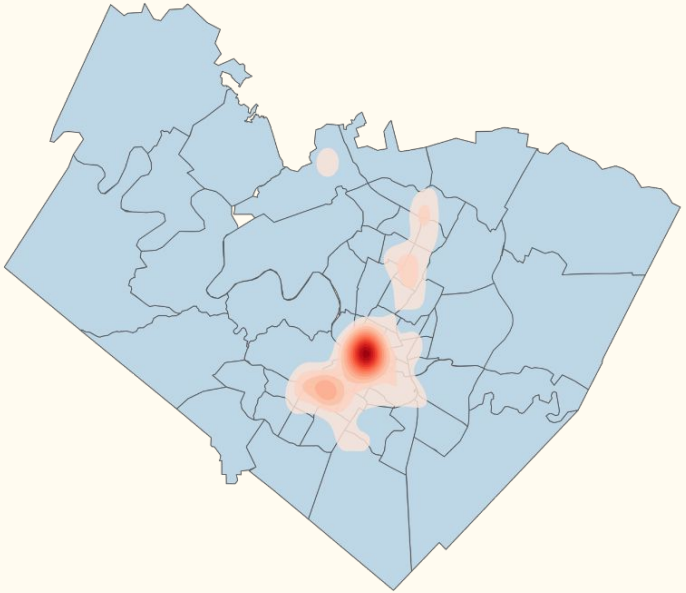
Geographic Distribution of Unsheltered Homelessness

Geographic Distribution - Heatmaps

PIT Count 2020

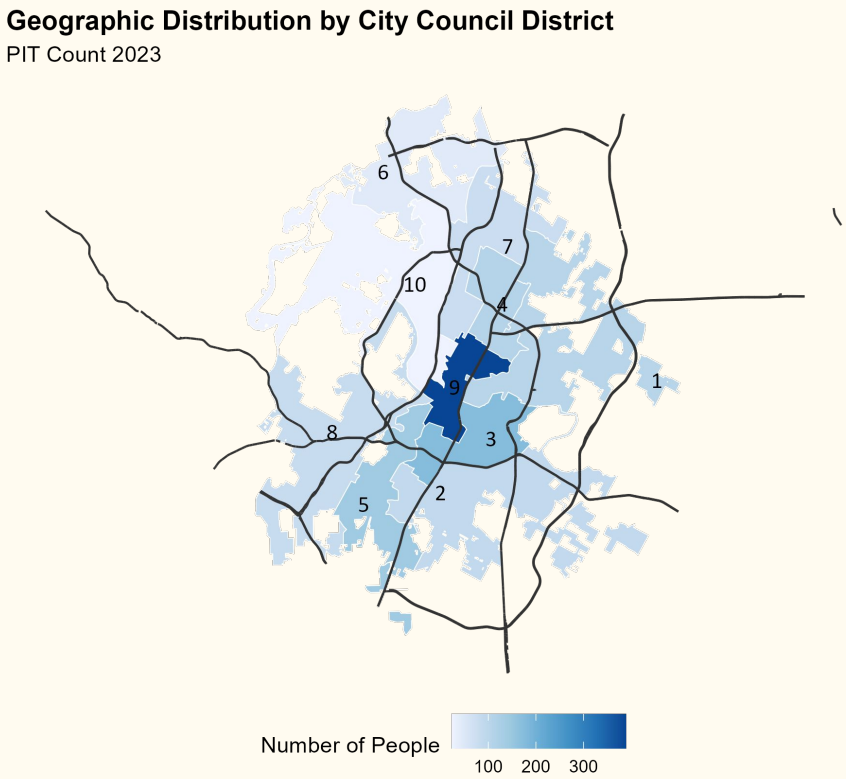


PIT Count 2023



Note: Using 15 bins for both Counts.

Geographic Distribution of Unsheltered Homelessness



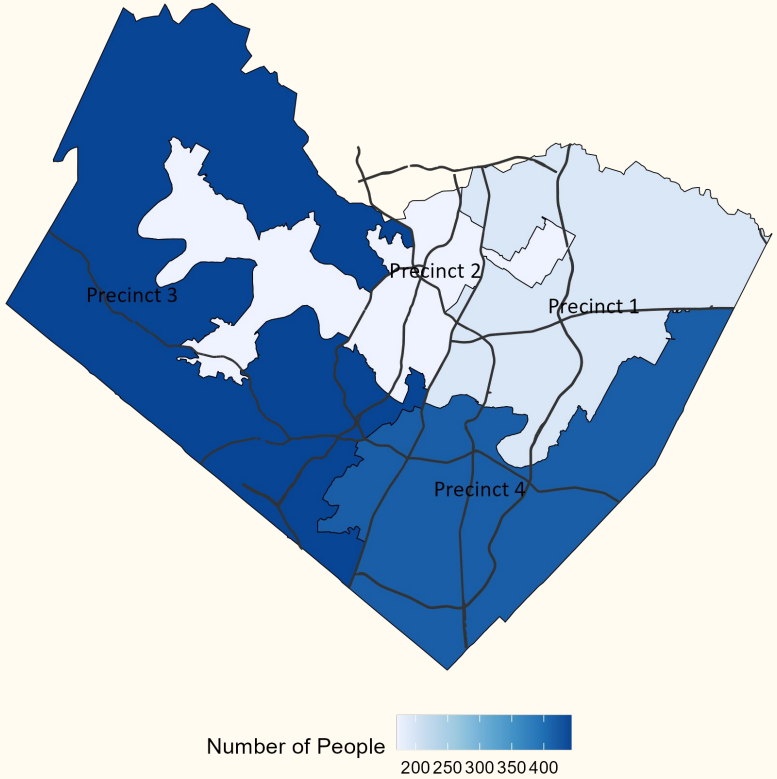
CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT	PIT 2020	PIT 2023	PERCENT CHANGE
District 1	84	104	23.8%
District 2	81	90	11.1%
District 3	282	174	−38.3%
District 4	167	111	−33.5%
District 5	60	141	135.0%
District 6	23	45	95.7%
District 7	104	76	−26.9%
District 8	78	81	3.8%
District 9	600	389	−35.2%
District 10	32	23	−28.1%

Both 2020 and 2023 numbers based on current City Council District geographies, which were redrawn in 2021.

Geographic Distribution of Unsheltered Homelessness

Geographic Distribution by County Commissioner Precinct

PIT Count 2023



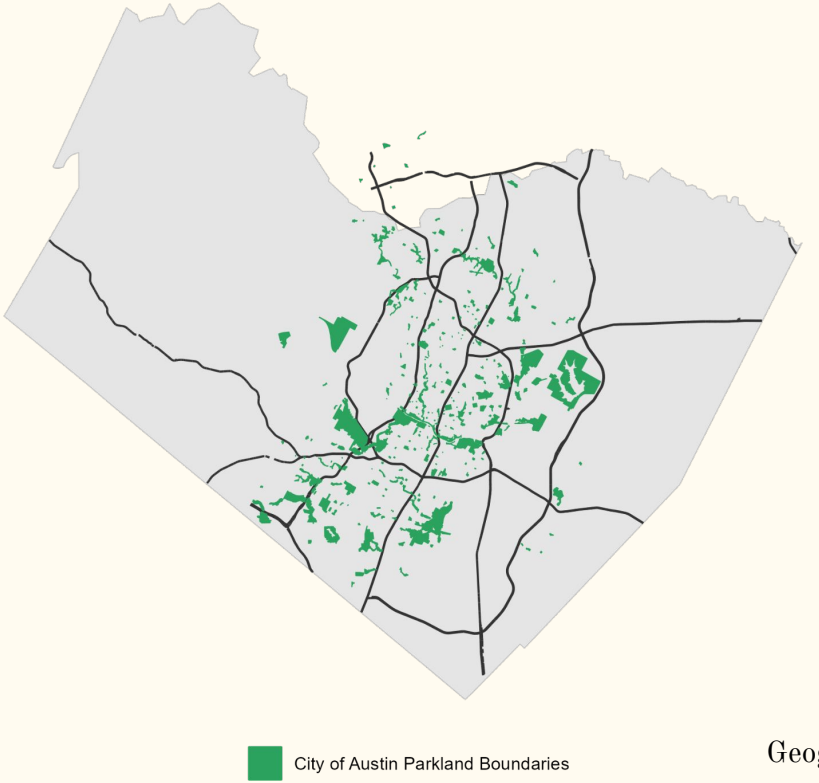
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT	PIT 2020	PIT 2023	PERCENT CHANGE
Precinct 1	226	194	−14.2%
Precinct 2	254	171	−32.7%
Precinct 3	629	443	−29.6%
Precinct 4	446	417	−6.5%

Both 2020 and 2023 numbers based on current Commissioner Precinct geographies, which were adopted in 2022.

Geographic Distribution of Unsheltered Homelessness

City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department Owned Parks

Parks, Nature Preserves, and Greenbelts



<u>Unsheltered Homelessness in Green Spaces:</u>

- In 2020, **approximately 5.2% of people** were counted in City of Austin-owned parks, nature preserves, and greenbelts.
- In 2023, that number increased to **13.6%**.
- As a proportion of all unsheltered homelessness, about **3 times as many people were living specifically in greenbelts and nature preserves** in 2023 than they were in 2020.

Geographic boundaries come from the City of Austin's Open Data Portal.

Geographic Distribution of Unsheltered Homelessness

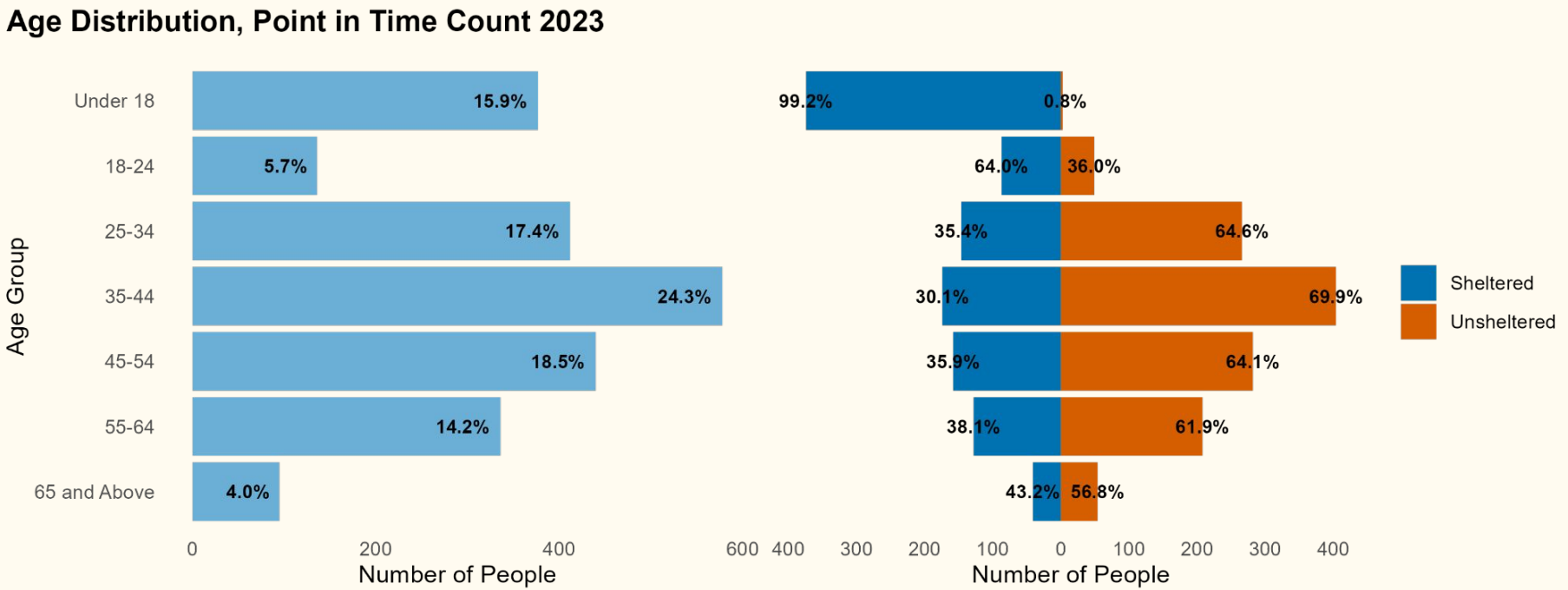
Key Takeaways About Geographic Distribution:

- A smaller proportion of people were counted in central parts of Austin/Travis County.
- City Council Districts 3 and 9 saw the largest percent decrease in the number of people counted.
- City Council Districts 1,5, and 6 saw the largest percent increase in the number of people counted.
- The number of people counted by Commissioner Precinct was more evenly distributed in 2023 than it was in 2020.
- A larger proportion of people were living in secluded areas (e.g., City-owned greenbelts and nature preserves) in 2023 than they were in 2020.

Note:

- In 2020, **34% of people** were counted in central PIT sections (south of 38th St, north of Ladybird Lake, east of Mopac, and west of I-35).
- In 2023, **27% of people** were counted in those sections.

Demographic Breakdowns of Homelessness



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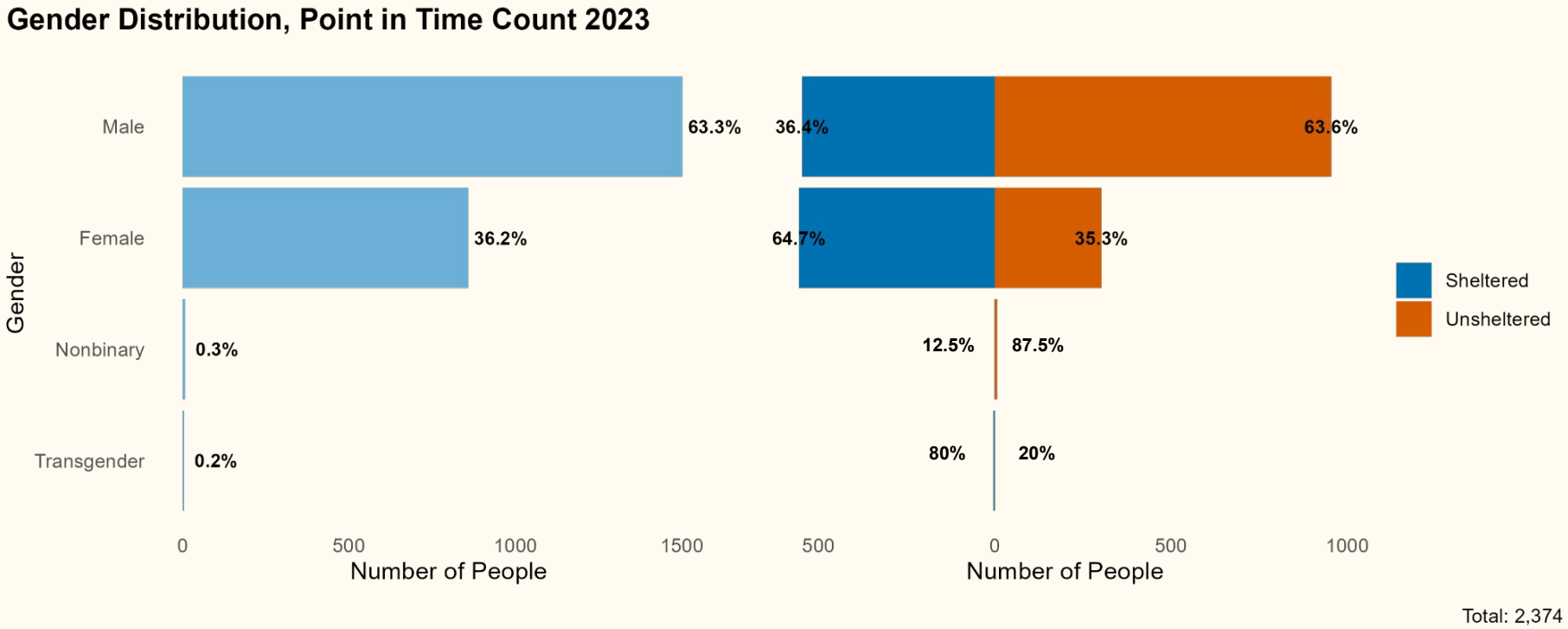

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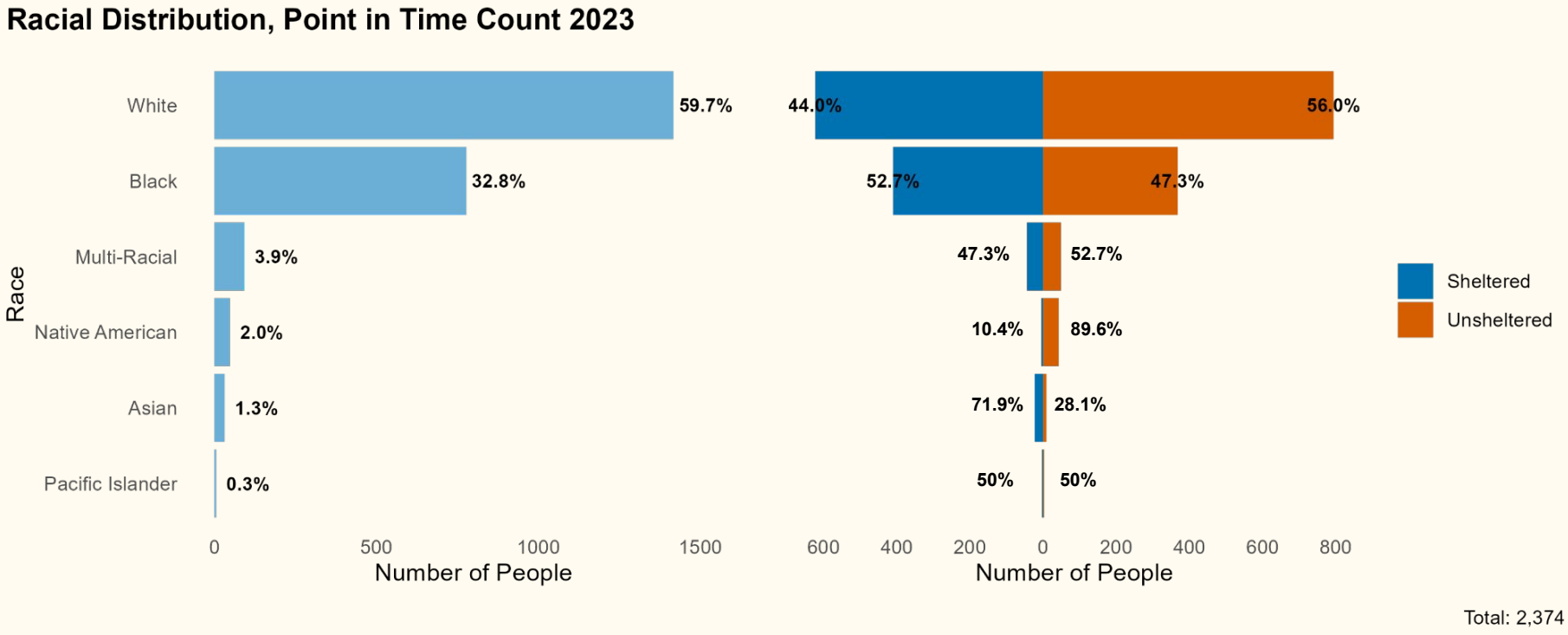

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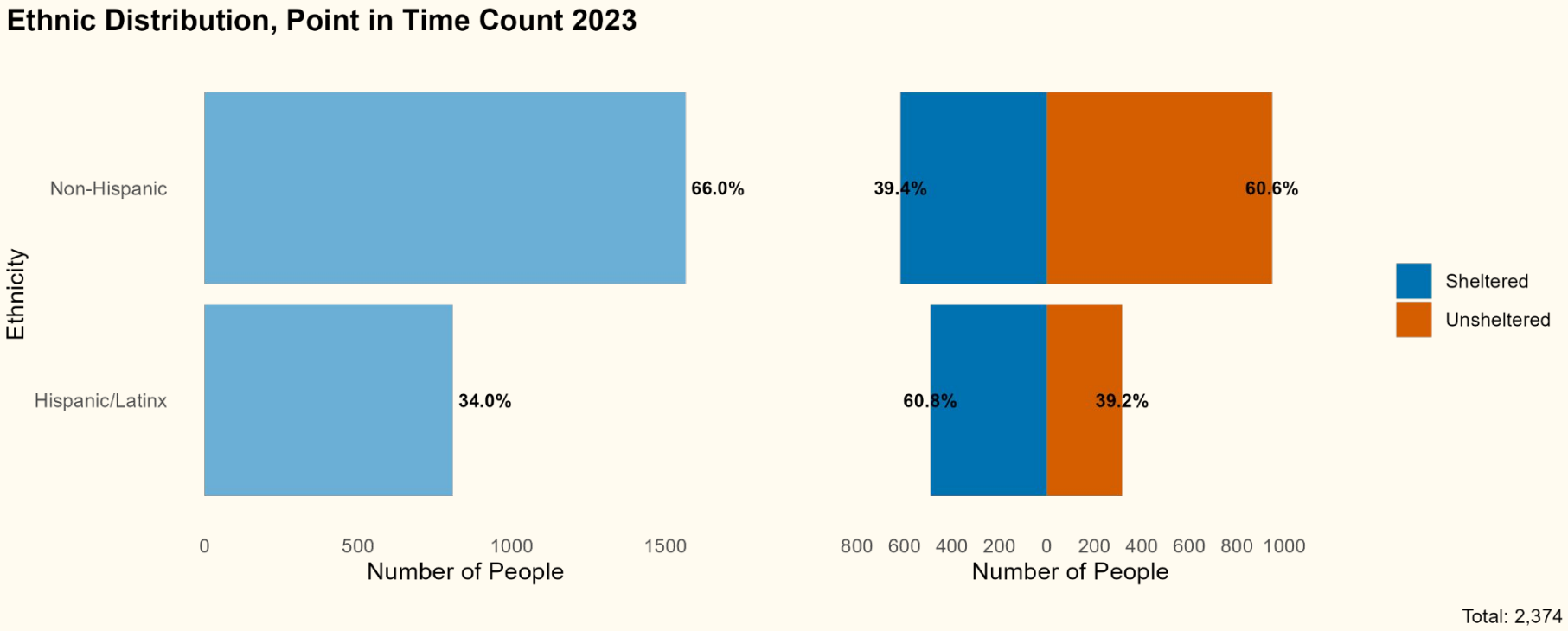
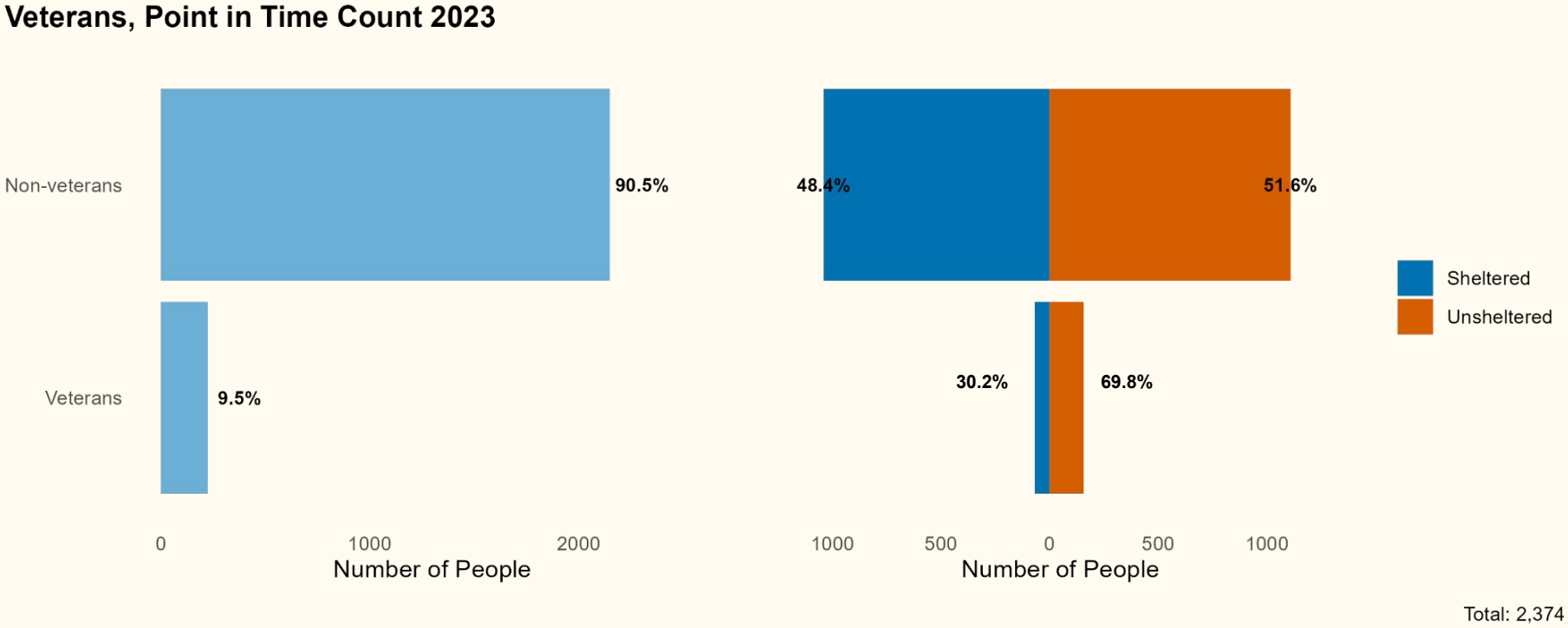


Demographic Breakdowns of Homelessness



Key Differences Between 2020 and 2023 PIT Counts

Age

- A smaller percentage of people counted were under the age of 25 in 2023 (21.6%) than in 2020 (26.3%).
- A smaller percentage of people counted were under the age of 18 in 2023 (15.9%) than in 2020 (18.8%).
- A smaller percentage of people counted were unaccompanied youth in 2023 (3.6%) than in 2020 (4.6%).

Gender

- There was a higher percentage of males counted in 2023 (63.3%) than were counted in 2020 (61.1%).

Key Differences Between 2020 and 2023 PIT Counts

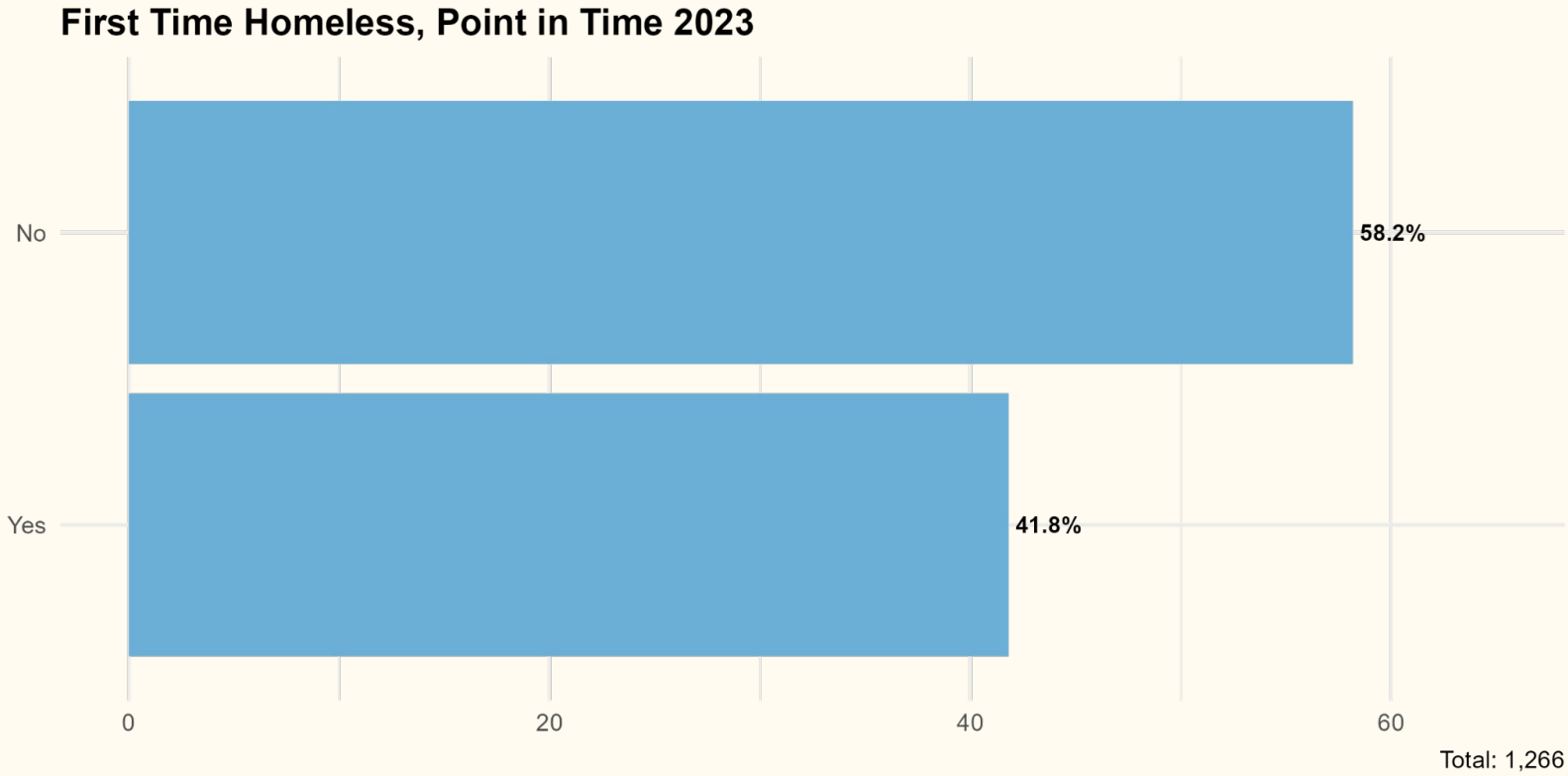
Race and Ethnicity

- A smaller percentage of Black people were counted in 2023 (32.8%) than were counted in 2020 (36.5%).
- A larger percentage of Hispanic/Latinx people were counted in 2023 (34%) than were counted in 2020 (29.8%).
- The proportion of Asians and Native Americans doubled between 2020 and 2023.

Veterans

- A slightly smaller percentage of veterans were counted in 2023 (9.5%) than were counted in 2020 (10.1%).

Other Indicators



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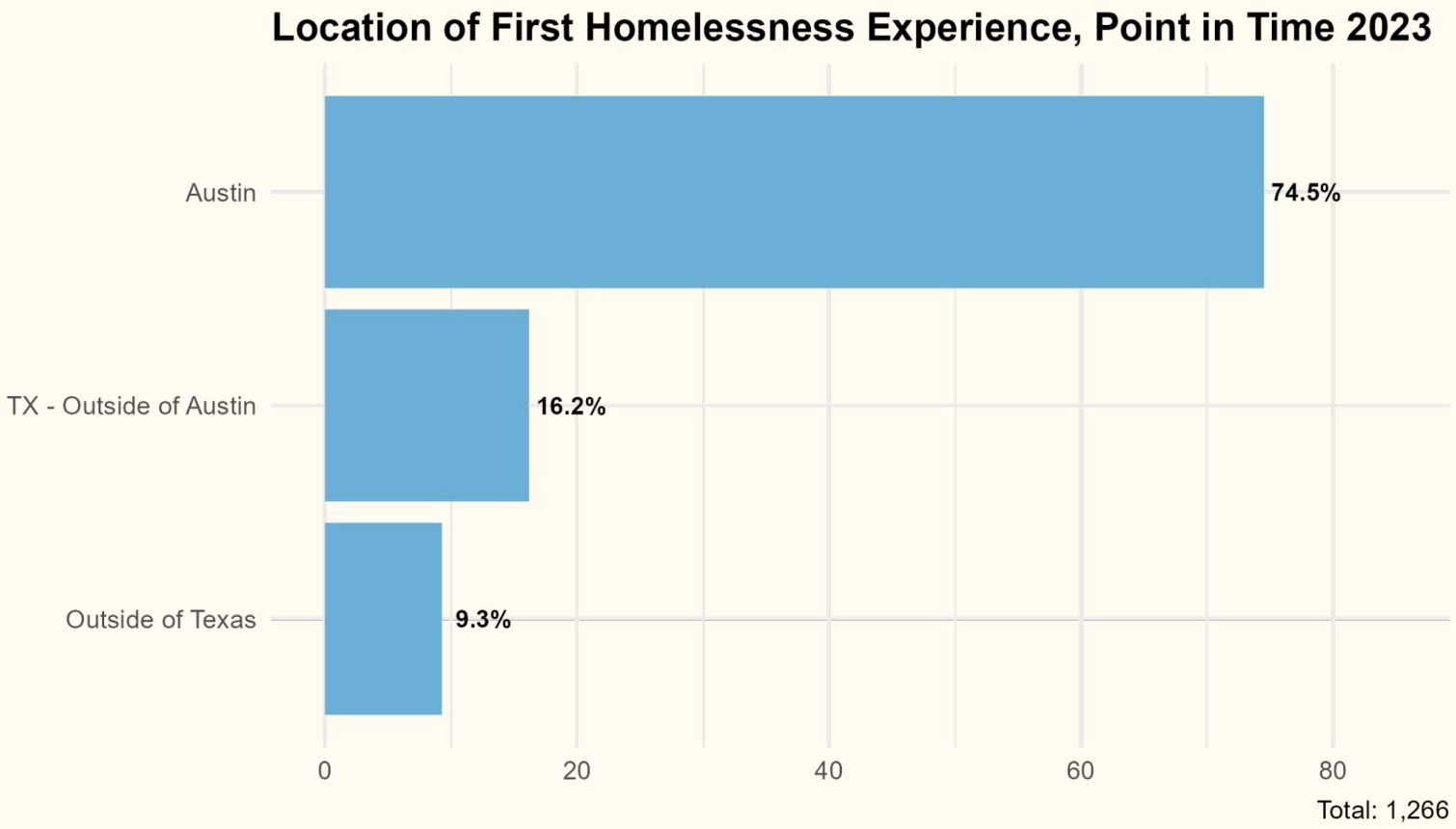


Key Differences Between 2020 and 2023 PIT Counts

First Time Homeless

- In 2020, **38.7%** of those who were unsheltered were homeless for the first time. In 2023, that number was **41.8%**.

Location of First Experience of Homelessness

- In 2020, **63.4%** of those who were unsheltered said they first experienced homelessness in Austin. In 2023, that number increased to **74.5%**.

Limitations of the Point in Time Count

Methodological

- PIT methods differ considerably from year to year and between communities/CoCs.
- Does not accurately reflect the transitory nature of homelessness.
    - This can be more accurately measured using **administrative data**.

Reasons for Significant Undercounting

- PIT excludes people in some institutions, such as hospitals and jails (see next slide).
- Per HUD guidelines, **people must be seen to be counted**. Some hard-to-reach individuals may not be counted.
    - This is especially the case in communities that **criminalize public camping**.
- Counts could vary considerably due to geography, weather, and level of volunteer engagement.

Supplementary Data on the Point in Time Count Date

Data from the Travis County Sheriff's Office

- On the day of the PIT count, the Travis County Sheriff's Office identified **699 individuals** in Travis County Jail (Central Booking Facility) likely to be experiencing homelessness (i.e., reported they were homeless before arrest).
- These individuals would almost certainly **not have been counted** in the PIT count later that night.

More Detailed Information

- The 699 individuals **accounted for 31%** of the total jail population.
- Of the 699 individuals:
  - 67% were people of color.
  - 86% were males.
  - 50% were between the ages of 17 and 36.

Alternative Ways of Measuring the Scope of Homelessness

Dashboard Monthly Estimates

- Starting in January 2021, we began estimating the number of people experiencing **unsheltered homelessness** using data from our local Homeless Management Information System (**HMIS**), a centralized database used by service providers.
- We count the number of people who take a Coordinated Assessment (CA), report living unsheltered on the CA, and had interacted with the Homelessness Response System in the prior 180 days.
- We think this estimate more accurately reflects the true scope of homelessness in our community and helps us address it in a more targeted way.
- For more, see:
  - https://www.austinecho.org/blog/2023/04/05/13589/
  - https://www.austinecho.org/dashboard/

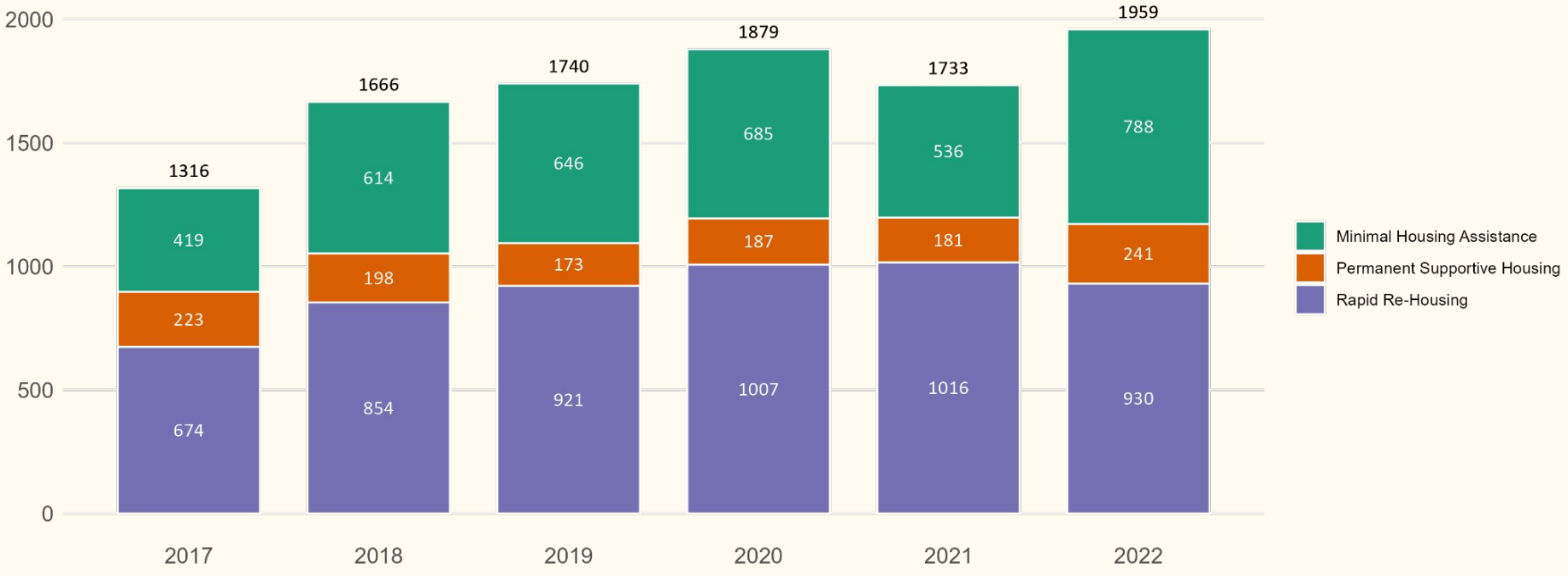
Comparison Between PIT and Administrative Data

	PIT	HMIS Method/Dashboard Estimates
Main purpose	An in-person count of the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness	A count of the number of people in HMIS experiencing unsheltered homelessness AND seeking permanent housing services
Advantages	Includes people who are unsheltered but NOT necessarily seeking housing services	A more accurate snapshot of what is happening in the Homelessness Response System; detailed subpopulation and demographic data
Disadvantages	1) Research suggests PIT is likely an undercount. 2) Incomplete demographic data.	1) Not all service providers use HMIS. 2) Dependent on number of housing assessments completed. 3) Circumstances change often for people in HMIS.

Community Efforts at Ending Homelessness

Addressing Homelessness in Our Community

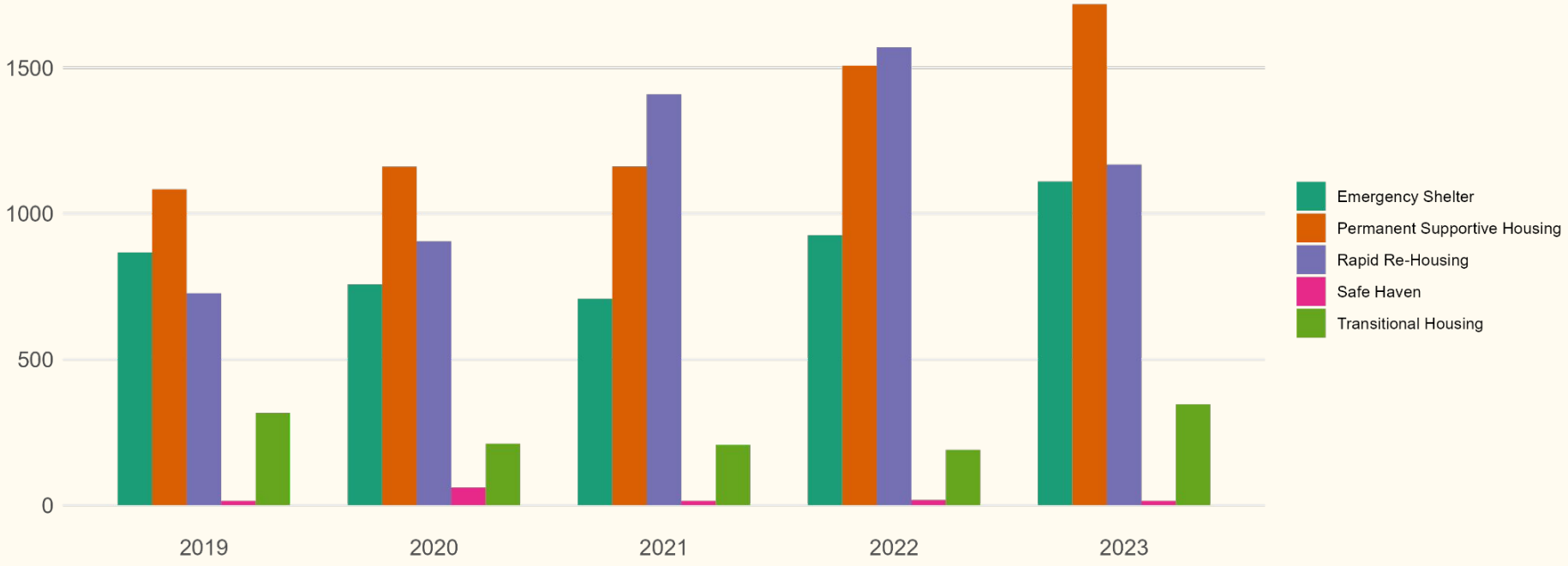
Number of People Housed in Homelessness Response System
2017-2022



Addressing Homelessness in Our Community

Homelessness Response System Capacity

Year-Round Beds, by Program Type, 2019-2023 (January)



Note: Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) capacity numbers, per HUD requirements, indicate how many people were housed in RRH the night of the PIT Count.

Addressing Homelessness in Our Community

Key Takeaways About the Homelessness Response System

- More people exited homelessness to permanent housing in 2022 than in any other year.
    - Especially noteworthy, **more people moved into Permanent Supportive Housing in 2022** than in any other year.
- The System's capacity to house people (i.e., number of contracted year-round beds) in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) has increased **59%** since 2019 and **14%** between 2022 and 2023.
- The System's Emergency Shelter capacity has increased **28%** since 2019 and **20%** between 2022 and 2023.

Ongoing Efforts to Add Capacity

- Our system needs more site-based PSH units for people experiencing chronic homelessness in our community.

About 1,000 new site-based PSH units are anticipated to be available by the end of 2025

- Approximately one quarter to one third of these units are anticipated to come online this year.

Thank you to all of our 2023 PIT Count Volunteers and Community Partners!

Want more info?

- https://www.austinecho.org/
- **Data and Reports:** https://www.austinecho.org/leading-system-change/data-and-reports/
- **Dashboard:** https://www.austinecho.org/dashboard/