



Policy Brief

May 2025

Hundreds of people set out in cars and on foot in the early morning hours to canvass our community with a message for people without homes: You count.

The Point in Time (PIT) Count is our community's collaborative biennial survey of unhoused people in Austin and Travis County.

The goal is to interview and provide care packs to as many people as possible living in tents, cars, abandoned buildings, and anywhere else people are not meant to live. The PIT Count provides a snapshot of what homelessness looks like at a given moment. It's a federal requirement, but it's also an opportunity – **our community's largest single engagement event that connects housed volunteers with our unhoused neighbors.**

608 volunteers
561 surveys
1 night





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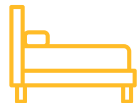
Volunteers and providers counted a total of 3,238 people experiencing homelessness in Austin/Travis County the night of January 25-26, 2025.



1,577

unsheltered

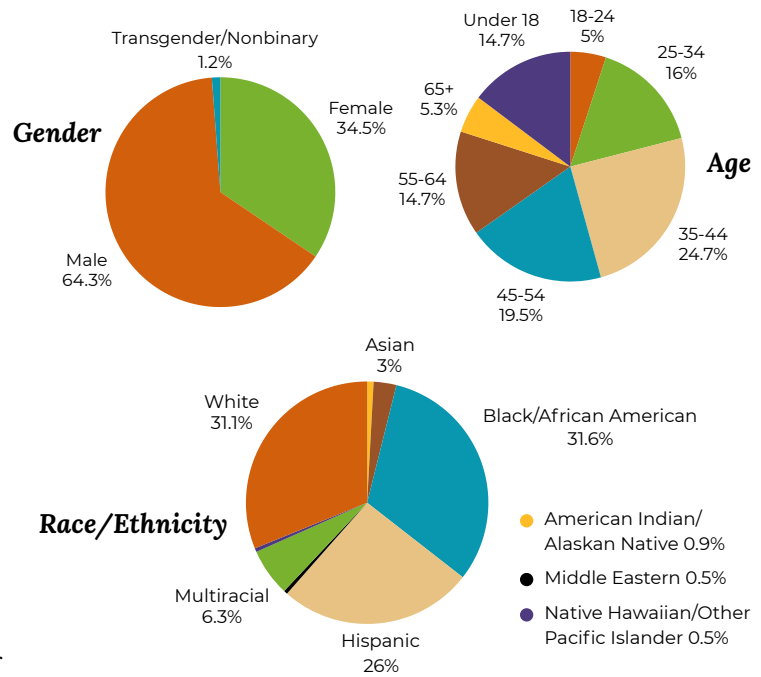
561 surveys
 1,016 observations



1,661

sheltered

1,269 emergency shelter
 373 transitional housing
 17 safe haven



Note: Data combines unsheltered and sheltered populations

Of the 561 unsheltered people who answered some or all of the survey questions:



13% were veterans



44% were homeless for the first time



68% became homeless in Austin/Travis County



40% were living with a physical disability

Note: Data does not include sheltered population



Note:
Heatmap represents
only unsheltered
homelessness



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651

people
slept on the
**street or
sidewalk**



308

people
slept in the
**woods or
outdoor camp**



186

people
slept in
a **vehicle**



133

people
slept under
a **bridge or
overpass**



97

people
slept in
a **park**



49

people
slept in an
**abandoned
building**



35

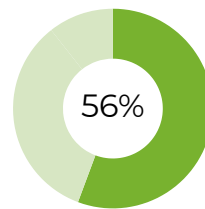
people
slept in a
**bus, train
station, or
airport**

*Another 118 people didn't answer, weren't sure, or were sheltered



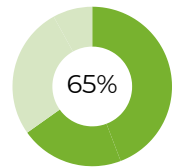
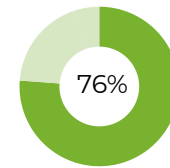
Our community can improve access to both short-term beds in emergencies and long-term resources available through our system.

Heard of CA



Done CA

CA in Last Year



170 people (30%) used a Cold Weather Shelter (CWS) when temperatures dipped below freezing in the last two years. Of the **323 people who didn't use a CWS**, some of the most common reasons include:

- Preferred to stay elsewhere (**24%**)
- Don't feel safe in shelter (**15%**)
- Unaware of shelter (**13%**)
- Didn't need to use one (**11%**)

Just over **half of people** had heard of the Coordinated Assessment (CA), our community's centralized housing needs evaluation – a requirement to be eligible for most housing programs. Of the 294 people who'd heard of it, **224 people had done a CA**. About **two-thirds of this group, or 146 people, had done a CA within the last year.**

Want more data?

Explore detailed, interactive charts and compare to 2023 data:

bit.ly/ATXPITdata





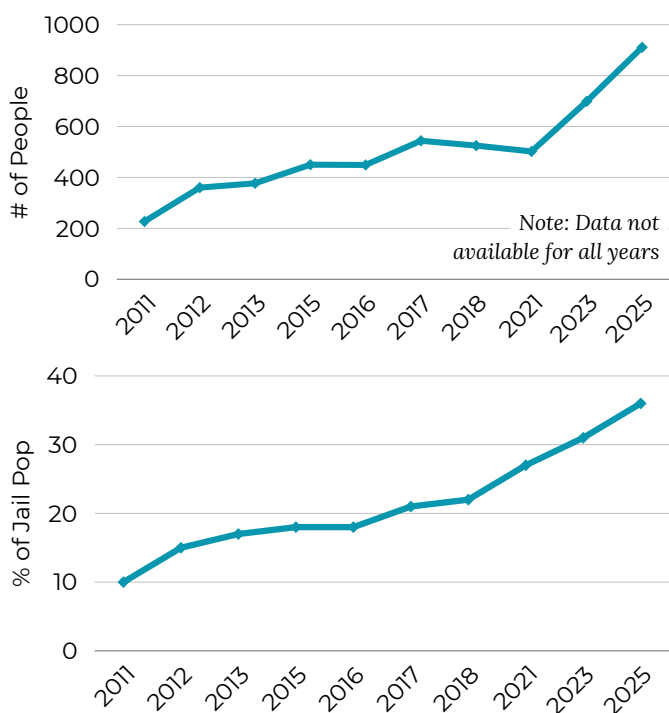
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911 people in the Travis County jail – 36% of the jail's population that night – were experiencing homelessness.


Jail data includes anyone who self-identifies as homeless, doesn't have a fixed address, or lists an address associated with a service provider, like the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH). **Due to federal requirements, people in jail are not included in the PIT Count.**

The number and percentage of people in the Travis County jail who are homeless during the PIT Count has risen sharply since 2011.



Criminalizing homelessness affects our understanding of the crisis in our community and our ability to serve people.

Homeless people in jail are not reflected in the snapshot the PIT Count provides. Neither are their needs, though our community must still be prepared to meet them. People in jail have limited or no access to service providers who can help find a stable living situation, so when someone goes to jail homeless, they tend to leave homeless. The Urban Institute finds **people who've been incarcerated are up to 13 times more likely to experience homelessness than the general public.** According to the City of Austin's Open Data Portal:


1,307
 citations have been issued under **"camping ban" ordinances** since 2021

 **259**
 of the citations have been **dismissed** - about 20%
 **105**
 people have been **convicted**

Most of these citations are issued in and around downtown. This results in a more widespread distribution of the population our system serves, making it **harder for people to access services they need.**