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Oregon Statewide Homelessness Estimates 2022

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A Report Prepared for Oregon Housing and Community Services

Oregon Statewide Homelessness Estimates 2022

August 2023



Portland State
Homelessness Research
& Action Collaborative

Portland State University
Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative

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Executive Summary

This report presents county-level estimates of people experiencing homelessness in Oregon in 2022 relying on data from the Point-in-Time (PIT) count. The PIT count is, in essence, a census of people experiencing literal homelessness—those either living without shelter, in an emergency shelter, or in certain forms of transitional housing. The PIT count is conducted by the eight Continuums of Care (CoCs) in Oregon, which are government/nonprofit groups that administer federal funding to address homelessness.

The 2022 PIT count listed 17,912 people as experiencing literal homelessness on a single night in January. The data suggest that there was little change in the sheltered homeless population between 2021 and 2022, with a decrease from 6,871 to 6,821. The PIT data also suggest that the unsheltered homeless population fell from 13,428 to 11,091. The change should be interpreted with caution, however, since there are persistent inconsistencies in how the PIT data are collected from year to year and place to place. In addition, the 2021 data used in this report are themselves estimates generated for that year's report. Those estimates were necessary due to the multiple Continuums of Care (CoCs) that did not conduct a full PIT count in 2021.

The most obvious pattern that emerges from a comparison of county-level 2021 estimates and 2022 data is that over this period the population of people experiencing homelessness, particularly sheltered homelessness, grew in most of the larger counties in the state but fell in most of the rest of the state. Unfortunately, the methodological differences mentioned above make it difficult to determine if this trend reflects actual changes in the population, if it is the result of different approaches to the PIT, or both.

The report also includes data from the Oregon Department of Education that uses a much broader definition of homelessness than that employed in the PIT. Though these data only cover school-age children, it is possible to make an approximate comparison between those estimates and those of children in the PIT. The results of that comparison suggests that the PIT vastly underestimates the number of children experiencing all forms of homelessness in Oregon. Statewide, the McKinney-Vento estimate was 8.5 times larger than the PIT estimate.

Finally, an analysis of the Housing Inventory Count (HIC) shows that statewide there were only 8,640 beds available to serve a homeless population of 17,912, meaning that there were more than twice as many people experiencing homelessness as there were shelter beds. This statewide trend was seen in 35 of the 36 counties in the state, suggesting that the shortfall affects all parts of the state including large metropolitan and smaller rural counties.

OREGON STATEWIDE HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATES 2022

Table 1: Statewide Homelessness Counts by County

Continuum of Care	County	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Unsheltered Rate
Central Oregon CoC	Crook	27	42	60.9%
	Deschutes	226	904	80.0%
	Jefferson	9	57	86.4%
Clackamas County CoC	Clackamas	270	327	54.8%
Jackson County CoC	Jackson	638	613	49.0%
Lane County CoC	Lane	775	2,105	73.1%
Portland/Multnomah County CoC	Multnomah	2,171	3,057	58.5%
Salem/Marion/Polk CoC	Marion	888	747	45.7%
	Polk	38	127	77.0%
Washington County CoC	Washington	581	227	28.1%
Balance of State (Rural Oregon CoC)	Baker	11	5	31.3%
	Benton	163	121	42.6%
	Clatsop	7	529	98.7%
	Columbia	19	215	91.9%
	Coos	43	468	91.6%
	Curry	0	127	100.0%
	Douglas	189	232	55.1%
	Gilliam	0	0	N/A
	Grant	5	6	54.5%
	Harney	0	8	100.0%
	Hood River	38	35	47.9%
	Josephine	65	266	80.4%
	Klamath	19	136	87.7%
	Lake	0	34	100.0%
	Lincoln	103	53	34.0%
	Linn	191	137	41.8%
	Malheur	28	141	83.4%
	Morrow	1	0	0.0%
	Sherman	2	4	66.7%
	Tillamook	35	92	72.4%
	Umatilla	29	60	67.4%
Union	18	13	41.9%	
Wallowa	1	2	66.7%	
Wasco	56	138	71.1%	
Wheeler	0	7	100.0%	
Yamhill	175	56	24.2%	
Total		6,821	11,091	61.9%

Introduction and Background

Numerous studies have shown that homelessness is closely linked to the affordability and availability of housing.¹ As just one example, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that across the U.S. "a \$100 increase in median rental price was associated with about a 9 percent increase in the estimated homelessness rate."² Homelessness rates have also been shown to increase more rapidly when median rent in an area exceeds about 30% of median income—the same rent/income ratio that qualifies a household as “cost burdened.”³ More than 87% of extremely-low-income households⁴ in Oregon are cost burdened⁵ and at least 139,000 additional units of housing are needed statewide just to address current housing shortages.⁶

Racism and discrimination—particularly against Black and Indigenous communities, but also other people of color, people with physical and mental disabilities, and members of the LGBTQAI+ community—have also been shown to increase the likelihood of homelessness due to impacts on: renting or purchasing housing; employment and income opportunities; health and behavioral health access and treatment; educational access and attainment; and arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates.^{7,8,9} These disparate impacts result in a disproportionate number of these groups experiencing homelessness, especially among the BIPOC community, as demonstrated in homelessness counts and estimates.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides funding to address homelessness and housing insecurity through Continuums of Care (CoC), regional networks of government agencies and service providers. As a condition of receiving federal funding, CoCs are required to submit reports on funding distribution, program administration and effectiveness, housing and shelter inventories, and

¹ Summarized in Colburn, G., and Clayton, P.A. (2022), *Homelessness is a Housing Problem: How Structural Factors Explain U.S. Patterns*, University of California Press.

² U.S. Government Accountability Office (2020), “Better HUD Oversight of Data Collection Could Improve Estimates of Homeless Population, GAO-20-433.

³ Glynn, C., and Fox, E. B. (2017), “Dynamics of Homelessness in Urban America,” *Annals of Applied Statistics*, Vol. 13 No. 1, 573–605.

⁴ Those at or below 30% of area median income.

⁵ National Low Income Housing Coalition (2022), “2022 Oregon Housing Profile,” www.nlihc.org.

⁶ ECONorthwest (2020), *Implementing a Regional Housing Needs Analysis Methodology in Oregon: Approach, Results, and Initial Recommendations*, Oregon Housing and Community Services.

⁷ National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (2019), *Housing not Handcuffs 2019: Ending the Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*.

⁸ Paul Jr., D.W., et al. (2020), “Racial discrimination in the life course of older adults experiencing homelessness: results from the HOPE HOME study,” *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless* 29, vol. 2: 184-193.

⁹ Olivet, J., et al. (2021), “Racial Inequity and Homelessness: Findings from the SPARC Study,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 693: 82-100.

numbers of people experiencing homelessness. At least every other year CoCs must conduct a Point-In-Time (PIT) count of people experiencing both unsheltered homelessness and sheltered homelessness in January. The sheltered count is submitted by service providers of emergency shelters, certain types of transitional housing, and safe havens. The unsheltered count is conducted by trained volunteers and staff who attempt to count everyone experiencing homelessness “in a place not fit for human habitation”—such as a vehicle, tent, or abandoned building—across the CoC region.

Both researchers and the federal government have identified serious shortcomings in the use of the PIT count to estimate the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Variations in training, methodology, funding, and geographic area between CoCs can affect the reliability of the count, and most PIT counts likely underestimate the number of people experiencing even the most narrow definition of unsheltered homelessness.¹⁰¹¹¹² Because the definition of homelessness used by HUD is more restrictive than that used by other federal agencies, such as one used by the Department of Education that includes people “doubled-up” in housing by necessity rather than choice, this also leads to an undercount of the total population experiencing homelessness. During the COVID pandemic, CoCs could receive an unsheltered count waiver to either skip the count, delay it, or use alternative data, such as coordinated access lists of people experiencing homelessness who have been registered to receive services, making it inaccurate to compare PIT counts from different years. The federal government recommends combining the PIT count with other sources of data to better estimate the total number of people experiencing homelessness.¹³

Terminology for homelessness, race, ethnicity, and gender identities used in this report align with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development terms as reported by CoCs. Although we use them here for consistency and clarity within a system that uses them, we recognize that these terms and the limited categories they represent are problematic and potentially harmful.

¹⁰ Schneider, M., Brisson, D., and Burnes, D. (2016), “Do We Really Know How Many Are Homeless?: An Analysis of the Point-in-Time Homelessness Count,” *Families in Society*, Vol. 97 No. 4, 321–329.

¹¹ Glynn and Fox (2017).

¹² U.S. Government Accountability Office (2020).

¹³ U.S. Government Accountability Office (2021), “HUD Should Help Communities Better Leverage Data to Estimate Homelessness, GAO-22-104445.

Methodology and Data Sources

The estimates of homeless individuals and shelter beds contained in this report were generated from a variety of sources and with a variety of methods. In terms of sources, the PIT data and HIC data were provided by the respective CoCs. For the five single-county CoCs (Lane County, Multnomah County, Jackson County, Washington County, and Clackamas County), the numbers reported here are essentially the same as those reported to HUD. For the three multi-county CoCs (Marion-Polk, Central Oregon, and the Balance of State) the estimation was more challenging. For each of those CoCs, the raw PIT and HIC Counts were broken down by county using geographic fields in the raw data. In all three cases, researchers spoke directly with the CoC staff to ensure that the methods used here matched those used by the CoC in calculating their PIT counts.

Estimates for different CoCs are not necessarily comparable because CoCs use a variety of methods to collect their PIT count data. Leaving aside any variation in how CoCs went about identifying people experiencing homelessness in their communities in their unsheltered count, some CoCs have begun using the Counting Us app for their unsheltered count, whereas others do not. Some CoCs also use Counting Us to generate their sheltered count, whereas others use data from their Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). In the Balance of State CoC, which has far more counties in its service area (26) than any other CoC, not every county used the exact same approach. These inconsistencies are not unique to Oregon, but they do create challenges in generating estimates of the homelessness that are consistent and comparable from place to place and year to year.

The McKinney-Vento data for children enrolled in school that were used in the report were produced at the county level by a separate agency, and were used as published in the report cited below.

Point-In-Time Count Data

Methodology

The county-level estimates in this report were generated from the same data that Oregon CoCs assembled and reported to HUD as part of their 2022 PIT counts. For the five single-county CoCs, no additional data processing was necessary, and so the numbers in this report matched the PIT counts reported to HUD.

The three multi-county CoCs—Central Oregon, Marion/Polk, and Balance of State—presented more of a challenge, as they serve three, two and twenty-six counties respectively. For these three CoCs, we used the raw (or only lightly processed) data from the sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts and conducted our own analysis using those data. This was possible because for the most part, the data sets included fields that allowed us to associate each record with a specific county. Along the way, we solicited and received feedback from the CoCs to ensure that our approaches were as close to theirs as possible. We followed the same general approach in assembling demographic data by county. For the records that lacked some or all demographic data, we used our own method of simply using those records that had data to impute demographics for those that lacked it. For this reason, the total counts of specific population subgroups may differ from those reported to HUD for the three multi-county CoCs, and there may be small differences between county totals for demographic tables and overall sheltered or unsheltered homelessness tables.

There are still serious challenges to developing comprehensive, county-level statewide estimates of people experiencing homelessness in 2022, including the following:

- Changes in the methods used from year to year by CoCs to estimate homelessness that limit comparability over time, even as newer approaches may yield more accurate counts.
- A lack of consistent methods among CoCs for conducting PIT counts makes it difficult to interpret direct comparisons between CoCs.

The PIT count estimates used in the trend analysis in this report are those that were estimated in the 2021 report on homelessness, rather than those that were reported to HUD that year. This was because several CoCs did not conduct a full PIT count in 2021 due to a federal waiver during the COVID-19 pandemic, and so the reported numbers were particularly unreliable. Details on the methodology used to estimate the 2021 numbers can be found in that report.¹⁴ Though the 2021 estimates are likely better

¹⁴ PSU Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative (2022) *Statewide Homeless Estimate 2021* available [here](#).

estimates of the homeless population in 2021 than the PIT counts reported to HUD, the fact that they were produced using a different method than the one used to generate the 2022 figures suggests that any comparison between the years should be interpreted with caution.

Statewide Sheltered Homelessness Estimates

Estimates and Trends

The sheltered homeless population in Oregon remained fairly constant between 2021 and 2022, according to analysis of data from the PIT count. It declined by 0.7% from 6,871 to 6,821. The stability masked a mix of growth and decline at the county level. The single largest absolute increase was in Marion County, which saw this population grow from 596 in 2021 to 888 in 2022, an increase of 292. The single largest decline was in Klamath County, which saw the sheltered homeless population decline from 221 in 2021 to just 19 in 2022, a decrease of 202.

The most obvious pattern in the data is that the six largest counties by population in the state (Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Lane, Marion, and Jackson) all saw growth in the sheltered homeless population. In contrast, most of the other counties (including all but one in the Balance of State CoC) saw a decline.

However, these trends should be interpreted with caution because of two issues:

1. The method by which the PIT data were counted changed in some places and it wasn't possible to determine the degree to which those changes affected the outcome.
2. The 2021 numbers are themselves estimates that were developed to correct for unreliability in numbers collected during the height of the COVID epidemic.

OREGON STATEWIDE HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATES 2022

Table 2: 2022 Sheltered PIT Count by County

Continuum of Care	County	2022
Central Oregon CoC	Crook	27
	Deschutes	226
	Jefferson	9
Clackamas County CoC	Clackamas	270
Jackson County CoC	Jackson	638
Lane County CoC	Lane	775
Portland/Multnomah County CoC	Multnomah	2,171
Salem/Marion/Polk CoC	Marion	888
	Polk	38
Washington County CoC	Washington	581
Balance of State (Rural Oregon CoC)	Baker	11
	Benton	163
	Clatsop	7
	Columbia	19
	Coos	43
	Curry	0
	Douglas	189
	Gilliam	0
	Grant	5
	Harney	0
	Hood River	38
	Josephine	65
	Klamath	19
	Lake	0
	Lincoln	103
	Linn	191
	Malheur	28
	Morrow	1
	Sherman	2
	Tillamook	35
	Umatilla	29
	Union	18
	Wallowa	1
Wasco	56	
Wheeler	0	
Yamhill	175	
Total		6,821

Demographics

Tables 3 through 5 show county-level demographic breakdowns of the sheltered homeless population by race, ethnicity, and gender, based on data from the 2022 PIT count. Because of the calculations and rounding used to estimate demographics for multi-county CoCs where county-level demographic data were unavailable, some totals may show small discrepancies.

A comparison between the racial demographics of people experiencing sheltered homelessness and census estimates for the same year show striking, but not unexpected, disparities. Black Oregonians make up a percentage of those experiencing sheltered homelessness three times higher than their proportion of the overall population; American Indian Oregonians make up a percentage almost twice their proportion of the population; and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders make up a percentage nearly three times higher. Multiracial Oregonians show similarly large disparities, while White and Asian Oregonians make up a lower total of those experiencing sheltered homelessness than their overall percentage of the population. The proportion of Hispanic/Latino Oregonians experiencing sheltered homelessness is one percentage point higher than their overall percentage of the population.

Overrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, and multiracial Oregonians among those experiencing sheltered homelessness mirrors regional and national disparities, a result of historical and current racism across systems and institutions that makes it more likely they will lose housing and more difficult for them to regain it once lost.

Table 3: 2022 Sheltered PIT by Race and County

Continuum of Care	County	White	Black or African-American	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Multiple Races
Central Oregon CoC	Crook	25	1	1	0	0	0
	Deschutes	195	8	1	9	2	12
	Jefferson	5	0	0	4	0	0
Clackamas County CoC	Clackamas	224	18	2	3	1	22
Jackson County CoC	Jackson	554	13	6	19	17	29
Lane County CoC	Lane	647	26	2	19	2	79
Portland/Multnomah County CoC	Multnomah	1,269	298	12	83	16	493

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Salem/Marion/Polk CoC	Marion	719	36	3	34	14	82
	Polk	30	3	0	1	0	3
Washington County CoC	Washington	458	36	3	22	32	30
Balance of State (Rural Oregon CoC)	Baker	9	0	0	2	0	0
	Benton	136	7	0	5	0	15
	Clatsop	5	1	0	0	0	1
	Columbia	17	0	0	0	0	2
	Coos	41	2	0	0	0	0
	Curry	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Douglas	166	3	0	4	0	16
	Gilliam	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Grant	4	0	1	0	0	0
	Harney	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hood River	29	1	0	5	0	3
	Josephine	61	0	0	3	0	1
	Klamath	15	0	0	2	0	1
	Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Lincoln	87	4	0	7	1	4
	Linn	167	10	2	6	1	4
	Malheur	20	1	0	1	0	5
	Morrow	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Sherman	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Tillamook	33	0	0	1	1	0
	Umatilla	27	0	0	1	0	1
	Union	18	0	0	0	0	0
	Wallowa	1	0	0	0	0	0
Wasco	48	1	0	0	0	7	
Wheeler	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Yamhill	144	2	2	6	3	18	
Total		5,155	471	35	238	90	829
Percent of Total		75.6%	6.9%	0.5%	3.5%	1.3%	12.2%
Census Totals (2022 Estimate)		85.9%	2.3%	5.1%	1.9%	0.5%	4.3%
Discrepancy		-10.3%	+4.6%	-4.6%	+1.6%	+0.8%	+7.9%

OREGON STATEWIDE HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATES 2022

Table 4: 2022 Sheltered PIT by Ethnicity and County

Continuum of Care	County	Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	Hispanic/Latino
Central Oregon CoC	Crook	24	3
	Deschutes	192	34
	Jefferson	8	1
Clackamas County CoC	Clackamas	250	20
Jackson County CoC	Jackson	485	153
Lane County CoC	Lane	726	49
Portland/Multnomah County CoC	Multnomah	1,923	248
Salem/Marion/Polk CoC	Marion	694	194
	Polk	29	10
Washington County CoC	Washington	424	157
Balance of State (Rural Oregon CoC)	Baker	5	6
	Benton	141	22
	Clatsop	6	1
	Columbia	13	6
	Coos	43	0
	Curry	0	0
	Douglas	166	23
	Gilliam	0	0
	Grant	5	0
	Harney	0	0
	Hood River	34	4
	Josephine	61	4
	Klamath	17	2
	Lake	0	0
	Lincoln	73	30
	Linn	178	13
	Malheur	18	10
	Morrow	0	1
	Sherman	1	1
	Tillamook	35	0
	Umatilla	25	4
Union	17	1	
Wallowa	1	0	
Wasco	39	17	
Wheeler	0	0	
Yamhill	135	40	
Total		5,768	1,054
Percent of State Total		84.5%	15.5%

OREGON STATEWIDE HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATES 2022

Table 5: 2022 Sheltered PIT by Gender and County

Continuum of Care	County	Female	Male	Transgender	Gender Non-Conforming	Questioning
Central Oregon CoC	Crook	6	21	0	0	0
	Deschutes	99	125	2	0	0
	Jefferson	1	8	0	0	0
Clackamas County CoC	Clackamas	115	154	1	0	0
Jackson County CoC	Jackson	286	343	5	1	3
Lane County CoC	Lane	255	494	8	18	0
Portland/Multnomah County CoC	Multnomah	662	1,418	42	49	0
Salem/Marion/Polk CoC	Marion	443	439	3	3	0
	Polk	19	19	0	0	0
Washington County CoC	Washington	249	329	1	2	0
Balance of State (Rural Oregon CoC)	Baker	6	5	0	0	0
	Benton	72	83	3	5	0
	Clatsop	3	4	0	0	0
	Columbia	7	12	0	0	0
	Coos	13	30	0	0	0
	Curry	0	0	0	0	0
	Douglas	88	100	0	1	0
	Gilliam	0	0	0	0	0
	Grant	4	1	0	0	0
	Harney	0	0	0	0	0
	Hood River	17	21	0	0	0
	Josephine	30	35	0	0	0
	Klamath	4	14	0	1	0
	Lake	0	0	0	0	0
	Lincoln	57	45	0	1	0
	Linn	64	125	1	1	0
	Malheur	12	15	0	0	1
	Morrow	1	0	0	0	0
	Sherman	1	1	0	0	0
	Tillamook	16	19	0	0	0
	Umatilla	15	14	0	0	0
	Union	10	8	0	0	0
	Wallowa	1	0	0	0	0
	Wasco	18	36	1	1	0
Wheeler	0	0	0	0	0	
Yamhill	62	110	0	2	1	
Total		2,636	4,028	67	85	5
Percent of State Total		38.6%	59.1%	1.0%	1.2%	0.1%

Statewide Unsheltered Homelessness Estimates

Estimates and Trends

According to data from the PIT count, from 2021 to 2022 the unsheltered homeless population in Oregon declined by 17.4% from 13,428 to 11,091. Multnomah County saw the largest absolute increase, reporting 3,057 unsheltered people experiencing homelessness, an increase of 638 over the prior year. The largest absolute decline was in Josephine County, which reported 742 fewer unsheltered individuals in 2022 than it did in 2021. This decline in Josephine was particularly notable, as it represents a decline of 73.6% from the prior year.

As was the case with the sheltered population, most of the less populous counties in the state saw a decline in the number of people experiencing homelessness. But while the larger counties all saw an increase in their sheltered homeless population, the change in the unsheltered homeless population differed considerably between them. For example, Multnomah and Jackson counties saw increases of 26.4% and 31.3%, respectively, but Washington and Clackamas saw declines of 55.7% and 21.8%, respectively.

As was the case with the sheltered counts, comparisons between the 2021 and 2022 unsheltered counts should be interpreted with caution for the following reasons:

1. The method by which the PIT data were counted changed in some places and it wasn't possible to determine the degree to which those changes affected the outcome.
2. The 2021 numbers are themselves estimates that were developed to correct for unreliability in numbers collected during the height of the COVID epidemic.

OREGON STATEWIDE HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATES 2022

Table 6: 2022 Unsheltered PIT by County

Continuum of Care	County	Total
Central Oregon CoC	Crook	42
	Deschutes	904
	Jefferson	57
Clackamas County CoC	Clackamas	327
Jackson County CoC	Jackson	613
Lane County CoC	Lane	2,105
Portland/Multnomah County CoC	Multnomah	3,057
Salem/Marion/Polk CoC	Marion	747
	Polk	127
Washington County CoC	Washington	227
Balance of State (Rural Oregon CoC)	Baker	5
	Benton	121
	Clatsop	529
	Columbia	215
	Coos	468
	Curry	127
	Douglas	232
	Gilliam	0
	Grant	6
	Harney	8
	Hood River	35
	Josephine	266
	Klamath	136
	Lake	34
	Lincoln	53
	Linn	137
	Malheur	141
	Morrow	0
	Sherman	4
	Tillamook	92
Umatilla	60	
Union	13	
Wallowa	2	
Wasco	138	
Wheeler	7	
Yamhill	56	
Total		11,091

Demographics

Tables 7 through 9 show county-level demographic breakdowns of the unsheltered homeless population by race, ethnicity, and gender, based on data from the 2022 PIT count. Because of the calculations and rounding used to estimate demographics for multi-county CoCs where county-level demographic data were unavailable, some totals may show small discrepancies.

A comparison between the racial demographics of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and census estimates for the same year show similar disparities to sheltered homelessness. Black Oregonians make up a percentage of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness more than two-and-a-half times their proportion of the overall population; American Indian Oregonians make up a percentage three times their proportion of the population; and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders make up a percentage more than two times higher. Multiracial Oregonians show similarly large disparities, while White and Asian Oregonians make up a lower total of those experiencing sheltered homelessness than their overall percentage of the population. Hispanic/Latino Oregonians make up a lower share of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness than that of their overall percentage of the population.

This overrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, and multiracial Oregonians among those experiencing unsheltered homelessness mirrors regional and national disparities, a result of historical and current racism across systems and institutions that makes it more likely they will lose housing and more difficult for them to regain it once lost.

Table 7: 2022 Unsheltered PIT by Race and County

Continuum of Care	County	White	Black or African-American	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Multiple Races
Central Oregon CoC	Crook	41	0	0	0	1	0
	Deschutes	798	20	0	30	5	50
	Jefferson	8	0	0	47	0	2
Clackamas County CoC	Clackamas	274	9	3	23	3	15
Jackson County CoC	Jackson	525	22	2	39	6	19
Lane County CoC	Lane	1,735	67	6	70	12	215
Portland/Multnomah County CoC	Multnomah	1,885	491	42	220	64	355
Salem/Marion/Polk CoC	Marion	616	25	1	41	22	41

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	Polk	96	10	0	16	1	4
Washington County CoC	Washington	191	7	4	5	1	19
Balance of State (Rural Oregon CoC)	Baker	5	0	0	0	0	0
	Benton	94	3	0	12	0	13
	Clatsop	491	10	2	16	1	9
	Columbia	194	3	2	11	2	2
	Coos	408	4	0	27	2	27
	Curry	102	1	1	5	0	18
	Douglas	209	4	0	10	0	9
	Gilliam	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Grant	5	0	0	0	0	1
	Harney	6	0	0	2	0	0
	Hood River	25	1	0	8	0	0
	Josephine	234	0	0	10	1	21
	Klamath	119	0	0	0	3	14
	Lake	32	0	0	0	0	2
	Lincoln	41	1	1	5	0	5
	Linn	131	1	0	1	0	4
	Malheur	132	3	0	4	0	3
	Morrow	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sherman	3	0	0	1	0	0
	Tillamook	86	0	0	1	2	2
	Umatilla	52	0	0	3	0	5
Union	11	0	0	1	0	1	
Wallowa	2	0	0	0	0	0	
Wasco	104	3	0	17	2	12	
Wheeler	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Yamhill	47	3	0	3	1	1	
Total		8,702	688	64	628	129	869
Percent of State Total		78.5%	6.2%	0.6%	5.7%	1.2%	7.8%
Census Totals (2022 Estimate)		85.9%	2.3%	5.1%	1.9%	0.5%	4.3%
Discrepancy		-7.4%	+3.9%	-4.5%	+3.8%	+0.7%	+3.5%

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Table 8: 2022 Unsheltered PIT by Ethnicity and County

Continuum of Care	County	Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	Hispanic/Latino
Central Oregon CoC	Crook	42	0
	Deschutes	809	95
	Jefferson	54	3
Clackamas County CoC	Clackamas	311	16
Jackson County CoC	Jackson	566	47
Lane County CoC	Lane	1,913	192
Portland/Multnomah County CoC	Multnomah	2,830	227
Salem/Marion/Polk CoC	Marion	641	106
	Polk	114	13
Washington County CoC	Washington	189	38
Balance of State (Rural Oregon CoC)	Baker	4	1
	Benton	102	19
	Clatsop	469	60
	Columbia	209	6
	Coos	406	62
	Curry	118	9
	Douglas	225	7
	Gilliam	0	0
	Grant	5	1
	Harney	8	0
	Hood River	27	8
	Josephine	237	29
	Klamath	129	7
	Lake	34	0
	Lincoln	48	5
	Linn	132	5
	Malheur	93	48
	Morrow	0	0
	Sherman	4	0
	Tillamook	87	5
	Umatilla	55	5
Union	13	0	
Wallowa	2	0	
Wasco	127	11	
Wheeler	0	7	
Yamhill	52	4	
Total		10,055	1,036
Percent of State Total		90.7%	9.3%

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Table 9: 2022 Unsheltered PIT by Gender and County

Continuum of Care	County	Female	Male	Transgender	Gender Non-Conforming	Questioning
Central Oregon CoC	Crook	27	15	0	0	0
	Deschutes	366	525	3	5	5
	Jefferson	20	37	0	0	0
Clackamas County CoC	Clackamas	93	230	2	1	1
Jackson County CoC	Jackson	160	446	0	5	2
Lane County CoC	Lane	764	1,319	10	12	0
Portland/Multnomah County CoC	Multnomah	1,204	1,765	38	50	0
Salem/Marion/Polk CoC	Marion	242	496	6	0	2
	Polk	41	85	0	1	0
Washington County CoC	Washington	61	161	5	0	0
Balance of State (Rural Oregon CoC)	Baker	1	4	0	0	0
	Benton	41	75	0	5	0
	Clatsop	208	315	1	5	0
	Columbia	84	128	2	1	0
	Coos	201	258	3	5	0
	Curry	46	81	0	0	0
	Douglas	69	163	0	0	0
	Gilliam	0	0	0	0	0
	Grant	2	4	0	0	0
	Harney	3	5	0	0	0
	Hood River	14	21	0	0	0
	Josephine	105	158	2	0	1
	Klamath	57	79	0	0	0
	Lake	18	16	0	0	0
	Lincoln	15	37	0	1	0
	Linn	45	90	0	1	0
	Malheur	66	75	0	0	0
	Morrow	0	0	0	0	0
	Sherman	1	3	0	0	0
	Tillamook	42	50	0	0	0
	Umatilla	24	36	0	0	0
	Union	2	10	0	1	0
Wallowa	0	2	0	0	0	
Wasco	40	93	2	2	0	
Wheeler	7	0	0	0	0	
Yamhill	27	29	0	0	0	
Total		4,096	6,811	74	95	11
Percent of State Total		36.9%	61.4%	0.7%	0.9%	0.1%

Department of Education Data

Methodology

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development includes the PIT count in its Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress. For that reason, it is often cited as an “official” estimate of the homeless population in the U.S. However, the PIT count is almost certainly an undercount of the true number of people experiencing homelessness, including in Oregon. One reason for this is that the PIT count includes only the people identified as experiencing homelessness by enumerators in the unsheltered count. For many reasons, including the criminalization of homelessness itself and the likelihood that interactions with the state could lead to dispossession of belongings or worse, many people experiencing homelessness avoid being seen if possible. And while some communities use social workers or homelessness outreach organizations to conduct the PIT count, in others the local police play a prominent role.

A second reason relates to the definition of “homelessness” used in the PIT. Essentially, the PIT counts only those who are living outside or in a place not meant for human habitation (“unsheltered”) and those living in a shelter or certain types of transitional housing (“sheltered”) on a single specific night. This leaves out individuals who may live outside some nights but not others, those living as guests of friends or family due to economic necessity rather than choice (i.e., “doubled up”), and those living in housing that is so precarious that they are highly likely to become homeless in the near future.

To get a sense of how an expanded definition of homelessness might affect an estimate of the size of the homeless population, we looked at the data collected by the Oregon Department of Education under the federal McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act. The act requires public schools to identify students who are experiencing homelessness and provide them with support and services. Critically, the act specifies a much broader definition of homelessness than the one employed in the PIT count. The McKinney-Vento Act defines the homeless population as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” and specifically includes the following categories:

- “children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks; [...] abandoned in hospitals; [or] migratory children.”

Estimates

Table 9 shows a county-level comparison between the number of children under age 18 experiencing homelessness counted in the sheltered and unsheltered PIT and the number of students experiencing homelessness identified by schools using a separate Department of Education definition (often referred to as the “McKinney-Vento” count due to the Act which provides the definition).¹⁵ The McKinney-Vento standard includes literal sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, as in the Department of Housing and Urban Development definition used in the PIT Count, but also includes “children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; [...] are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.”¹⁶

In addition to the differing definitions used, the ages of the two groups are not the same. The PIT data include individuals under age 18, whereas the McKinney-Vento data include individuals enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12. Accordingly, the PIT data would include individuals not in school, particularly those ages 0-5 who may be too young for kindergarten, who are not counted in the McKinney-Vento data. Conversely, the McKinney-Vento count would include some individuals enrolled in high school who are 18 years old and thus not included in the PIT count.

This slight discrepancy aside, Table 10 shows clearly that the PIT data vastly undercounts this segment of the homeless population. In every county, the McKinney-Vento count is larger than the PIT count, often by a large margin. Statewide, the McKinney-Vento count of 19,032 is nearly ten times the PIT count of 2,231. To give a sense of the scale of this difference, if the total Oregon PIT count for all ages of 17,912 were adjusted by the same factor, it would yield a statewide homeless estimate of 134,919.

¹⁵ McKinney-Vento data from Oregon Dept. of Education (2022) “Oregon Statewide Report Card 2021-2022: An Annual Report to the Legislature on Oregon Schools” available [here](#).

¹⁶ U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (2018) “Key Federal Terms and Definitions of Homelessness Among Youth.”

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Table 10: Comparison of School-Age Children and Under-18 PIT Count in 2022

County	PIT Count	McKinney-Vento	Difference (McKinney-Vento - PIT)
Baker	6	211	205
Benton	27	421	394
Clackamas	51	860	809
Clatsop	178	264	86
Columbia	19	94	75
Coos	126	684	558
Crook	13	83	70
Curry	15	80	65
Deschutes	205	725	520
Douglas	59	337	278
Gilliam	0	36	36
Grant	3	25	22
Harney	0	25	25
Hood River	3	49	46
Jackson	161	2,086	1,925
Jefferson	0	131	131
Josephine	68	809	741
Klamath	1	499	498
Lake	3	63	60
Lane	300	2,006	1,706
Lincoln	30	630	600
Linn	16	996	980
Malheur	21	372	351
Marion	210	1,528	1,318
Morrow	0	97	97
Multnomah	422	2,465	2,043
Polk	12	140	128
Sherman	0	<10	<10
Tillamook	32	161	129
Umatilla	24	241	217
Union	3	115	112
Wallowa	0	25	25
Wasco	11	84	73
Washington	171	2,102	1,931
Wheeler	6	38	32
Yamhill	35	550	515
Oregon Total	2,231	19,032	16,801

Housing Inventory Count

In addition to the PIT count, CoCs also provide HUD with an accounting of the number of shelter beds (specifically programs classified as Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, or Transitional Housing) that were available in their region on the night of the PIT count. The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) of beds by county are shown in Table 11, along with the PIT count and the difference between the two. Statewide, there were more than twice as many people experiencing homelessness (17,912) as there were beds (8,640),¹⁷ representing a statewide shortfall of 9,272 beds. Out of all thirty-six counties in the state, only Morrow county had more beds than reported homeless individuals, and it was one of the smaller counties. All other counties reported more people experiencing homelessness than shelter beds. Seventeen counties, including almost all of the large metropolitan counties in the state, had a shortfall of more than 100 beds. The one exception to this was Washington County, the second largest in the state by population, which reported a shortfall of 49 beds. The largest shortfalls were reported in Multnomah and Lane counties, which have shortfalls of 2,275 and 1,497 beds, respectively. These shortfalls are especially concerning given the concerns about PIT data undercounting the true number of people experiencing homelessness.

¹⁷ A total of 19 beds in HIC reports did not have geographic information and were excluded from the totals and county-level table.

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Table 11: 2022 Housing Inventory Data and PIT Data by County

County	Total PIT Count	Total Beds from HIC	Bed Shortfall
Crook	69	26	43
Deschutes	1,130	332	798
Jefferson	66	28	38
Clackamas	597	290	307
Jackson	1,251	674	577
Lane	2,880	1,383	1,497
Multnomah	5,228	2,953	2,275
Marion	1,635	1,030	605
Polk	165	9	156
Washington	808	759	49
Baker	16	0	16
Benton	284	95	189
Clatsop	536	16	520
Columbia	234	17	217
Coos	511	28	483
Curry	127	0	127
Douglas	421	160	261
Gilliam	0	0	0
Grant	11	0	11
Harney	8	0	8
Hood River	73	65	8
Josephine	331	110	221
Klamath	155	14	141
Lake	34	0	34
Lincoln	156	72	84
Linn	328	294	34
Malheur	169	24	145
Morrow	1	12	-11
Sherman	6	0	6
Tillamook	127	38	89
Umatilla	89	18	71
Union	31	29	2
Wallowa	3	0	3
Wasco	194	30	164
Wheeler	7	0	7
Yamhill	231	134	97
Total	17,912	8,640	9,272

Conclusion

The estimates contained in this report suggest that according to PIT data, the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night in Oregon in 2022 was similar to that in 2021, and that the size of the unsheltered population fell slightly between those years. However, beneath those statewide totals, there were large differences in the trend between the larger urban counties and the rest of the state. This trend was particularly obvious in the sheltered count. Unfortunately, the inconsistency in counting makes it difficult to tell whether this was an actual difference in trend or the result of methodological differences between the larger and smaller counties.

In an attempt to paint a fuller picture of the state of homelessness in Oregon, this report also included data on student homelessness from the Oregon Department of Education and the Housing Inventory Count. The former, which uses a broader definition of homelessness than that employed in the PIT count, suggested that the actual homeless population amongst children might be seven to eight times larger than reported. While no estimation method or definition of homelessness is beyond reproach, the size of this disparity suggests that the PIT count data is very likely a severe underestimate of homelessness in Oregon.

Finally, the inclusion of HIC data allowed for a comparison of the estimates of the homeless population from the PIT with the available beds on the night of the count. That analysis showed that the number of shelter beds statewide was sufficient to serve less than half of the people experiencing homelessness, even using the likely underestimate of the homeless population from the PIT count. Furthermore, a comparison of county-level HIC and PIT count data showed that the shortfall was present in every county of the state except one, suggesting that resources are insufficient in both urban and rural areas. All in all, the data suggest that both statewide and at the local level, the available resources are insufficient to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

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PSU-HRAC addresses the challenges of homelessness through research that uncovers conditions that lead to and perpetuate homelessness. Our goal is to help reduce homelessness and its negative impacts on individuals, families and communities, with an emphasis on communities of color.

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