



BRIDGING THE GAP

2026 NEIGHBOR ISLANDS' POINT IN TIME COUNT

TOPLINE REPORT

OVERVIEW

The 2026 PIT represents the best available data for estimating homelessness in the rural counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i on the night of January 25, 2026. The estimate adheres to the federal definition of homelessness, which includes individuals and families residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities, as well as people identified as sleeping and living in an unsheltered location on the night of the count. The count is neither a measure of housing stability among people residing in housing nor a measure of the conditions of such housing and the general housing environment. HUD requires BTG to produce an unduplicated estimate of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on a one-day point-in-time conducted during the last 10 days of January. The count is a one-day snapshot of homelessness.

The main objective of this year's count was to obtain a reliable estimate of the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and families. The count helps to assess current levels of homelessness by household type, provide estimates for levels of veteran, chronic, unaccompanied youth, and parenting youth homelessness, and measure the prevalence of other underlying causes of homelessness, such as mental health and substance use disabilities. Each year, PIT reporting is an integral part of local and national planning and supports policy and resource allocation decisions.

BTG's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) was utilized to extract most of the sheltered data needed for this report and continues to serve as the repository for surveys collected during the unsheltered canvassing. The HMIS was used to count 455 of the 558 sheltered homeless this year (82 percent). The HMIS is a centralized database that records services rendered to homeless individuals by service providers throughout BTG. Service providers receiving federal, state, or county funding participate in the HMIS as required. Some privately funded agencies use HMIS for its reporting capabilities.

To ensure that sheltered HMIS client and enrollment data were accurate, administrators contacted emergency and transitional shelter providers in the lead-up to the count. They confirmed that all clients sleeping in these facilities on the night of the count had active HMIS records. Five domestic violence shelters and one temporary emergency shelter not participating in the HMIS were contacted individually and asked to complete a manual survey for the night of the count. These six shelters accounted for 103 of the 558 total sheltered this year (18 percent).

For the unsheltered component of the PIT, BTG implemented a multi-day canvassing effort in 2026. This encompassed a multi-day physical count that occurred between Monday, January 26th, and Saturday, January 31st. Field staff and volunteers asked all individuals who appeared to be, or were known to be, homeless during this period, “Where did you sleep this past Sunday, January 25th?” to help ensure that those counted were living in places not meant for human habitation on the night of the count. In 2026, Hawai`i Island continued to collect data on five descriptive questions on the Single and Head of Household surveys. These questions solicited information from respondents regarding duration in Hawai`i, causes of homelessness, criminal history, emergency room utilization, and the services that could be provided to help end homelessness. Responses to these questions are detailed more extensively in the “Hawai`i Island Additional Unsheltered Questions” section of this report.

Unsheltered survey data was analyzed and used to create Tableau and ArcGIS dashboard data visualizations comparing PIT data since 2015. These dashboards accompany the tables presented in this report and are available on the [BTG Website](#) under the Reports menu header.

The unsheltered survey form is largely based on HUD-defined data collection. Surveys collected during the count were reviewed for accuracy and completeness, entered in the PIT module of the HMIS, unduplicated, and analyzed to obtain the final statistics included in this report.

Unsheltered survey forms, along with other PIT resources, can be accessed from the BTG website. The following unsheltered surveys were not included in the final unsheltered tally.

- Clients who reported living in a sheltered situation on the night of January 25, 2026.
- Duplicate surveys or records that were already counted in the sheltered component.

Stakeholders, regional leaders, homeless service providers, and volunteers attended several planning meetings and virtual training leading up to the PIT. The purpose was to convey the count’s methodology to all involved, provide background and instructions, and to answer any questions regarding the surveys and methodology used during the unsheltered count.

Field staff comprised of team members from service agencies that regularly conduct outreach to unsheltered homeless individuals. Survey teams were assigned to familiar regions to ensure that many of the high-density areas frequented by unsheltered homeless people were surveyed. Skilled outreach staff familiar with these geographic areas and known to individuals experiencing homelessness were more likely to obtain accurate information. Service-based locations, such as food pantries or drop-in centers, were also covered extensively during the count to reach additional unsheltered homeless people.

This annual count is one tool used to track progress, educate the public, and attract resources to address homelessness in our communities. The PIT Count helps communities plan services and programs to appropriately address local needs, measure progress in decreasing homelessness, and identify strengths and gaps in a community’s current homelessness assistance system.

Bridging the Gap (BTG), representing Hawai`i County, Maui County, and Kaua`i County, is the Neighbor Islands’ Continuum of Care (CoC). A CoC consists of members representing various public and private agencies that work together to plan and promote a community-wide

commitment to ending homelessness. Data collected in each county is analyzed and aggregated to determine the total CoC results. The major findings of each jurisdiction's PIT Count are required and reported in its annual funding application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The results of 2026 PIT data results show:

- **2% reduction in total homelessness, from 1,895 people to 1,863 people;**
- 10% reduction in sheltered homelessness, decreased by 61 people from 619 in 2024 to 558 in 2026;
- **2% increase in unsheltered homelessness, from 1,276 people in 2024 to 1,305 people in 2026;**
- **6% reduction in family households experiencing homelessness** from 133 family households in 2024 to 125 family households in 2026;

NEIGHBOR ISLANDS SUMMARIES (2024 - 2026)

Maui County Summary Highlights

From 2024 to 2026:

- Homelessness remained essentially flat, decreasing by **less than 1%** (from 654 persons in 2024 to 651 in 2026).
 - Unsheltered homelessness increased by **40%** (from 285 persons in 2024 to 398 in 2026).
 - Sheltered homelessness decreased by **31%** (from 369 persons in 2024 to 253 in 2026).
- Family homelessness increased by **3%** (from 59 families in 2024 to 61 in 2026).
- Veteran homelessness increased by **53%** (from 15 veterans in 2024 to 23 in 2026).

Kaua'i County Summary Highlights

From 2024 to 2026:

- Homelessness decreased by **1%** (from 523 persons in 2024 to 516 in 2026).
 - Unsheltered homelessness decreased by **5%** (from 464 persons in 2024 to 440 in 2026).
 - Sheltered homelessness increased by **28%** (from 59 persons in 2024 to 76 in 2026).
- Family homelessness decreased by **6%** (from 33 families in 2024 to 31 in 2026).
- Veteran homelessness remained the same (21 veterans in 2024 and 21 in 2026).

Hawai'i County Summary Highlights

From 2024 to 2026:

- Homelessness decreased by **3%** (from 718 persons in 2024 to 696 in 2026).

- Unsheltered homelessness decreased by **11%** (from 527 persons in 2024 to 469 in 2026).
- Sheltered homelessness increased by **20%** (from 191 persons in 2024 to 229 in 2026).
- Family homelessness decreased by **20%** (from 41 families in 2024 to 33 in 2026).
- Veteran homelessness increased by **16%** (from 38 veterans in 2024 to 44 in 2026).

See the County topline or full reports for more detailed information on each County, including year-to-year trends and analysis.

The full report provides more detailed information on the Point-in-Time Count or Bridging the Gap. All reports are available at <https://www.btghawaii.org/reports/hic-&-pit/>

COMMUNITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

BTG's efforts to provide housing for the homeless, enhance preventive measures, and expand street outreach are crucial. However, without dedicated resources, these initiatives may worsen homelessness in our communities.

BTG endorses the following actions:

1. BUILD, ACQUIRE, AND PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Homelessness is ultimately a housing problem. To reduce homelessness, Hawai'i must continue to dedicate itself to increasing the housing supply — especially deeply affordable housing for those whose incomes fall at or below 30% of Area Median Income. BTG will continue to advocate for prioritizing funding to support the purchase, construction, and development of more deeply affordable housing.

2. INCREASE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAMS

As a community, we must be committed to keeping people housed. Therefore, we must continue to support families in retaining their housing after a period of homelessness. This will involve funding robust programs that provide intensive, ongoing case management and resource connectivity. Supportive services are particularly important for households with disabilities, trauma, addiction, a history of long-term homelessness, and other significant challenges to maintaining stable housing. Housing combined with supportive services is the foundation for long-term housing stability.

3. MAINTAIN RAPID RE-HOUSING (RRH) & LONG-TERM RENT SUBSIDY PROGRAMS

Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families exit homelessness quickly and return to permanent housing by providing three core program activities: housing identification, time-limited financial assistance, and housing-based case management services. In addition to shallow subsidies like Rapid re-housing,

long-term rental subsidy programs must be expanded alongside increases in affordable housing units.

4. **EXPAND HOMELESS PREVENTION & DIVERSION STRATEGIES**

We must strengthen practices and increase system capacity to divert families from entering homelessness. Homeless prevention resources are critical for households that may need some assistance as they struggle to remain housed.

5. **ENHANCE AN INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED OUTREACH RESPONSE**

Individuals experiencing homelessness face severe health risks and reduced life expectancy, making consistent outreach and **street medicine** vital for both survival and stability. By delivering medical care and behavioral health services directly to unsheltered populations, multidisciplinary teams build the essential trust required to bridge the gap between the streets and formal care systems. This proactive, mobile approach not only improves individual health outcomes but also significantly reduces the systemic burden and costs associated with emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

Across Hawai‘i County, Maui, and Kaua‘i, the primary objective is to expand outreach coverage and transform shelters from endpoints into **pathways for permanent housing**. Addressing regional challenges—such as Maui’s shelter transitions, Kaua‘i’s focus on long-term stability, and the geographic isolation of Hawai‘i County—requires a highly coordinated, integrated response system. Sustained investment in housing navigation, case management, and mobile service delivery is essential to reducing the duration of homelessness and ensuring a transition toward long-term stability for all residents.