



## 2026 HAWAII COUNTY POINT IN TIME COUNT TOPLINE REPORT

### Overview

The 2026 data shows a **modest 3% reduction** in total homelessness compared to 2024, representing a decrease of 22 people. On the night of January 25, 2026, there were 696 total individuals experiencing homelessness on the island. Notably, the number of families with children experiencing homelessness has decreased by 62% since 2018, and the **number of unsheltered families has dropped by 91%**. These are positive signs that consistent, intentional efforts over time to reduce homelessness can be effective. This reduction in homelessness also reflects the importance of ongoing collaboration and cooperation among traditional homeless-serving nonprofits, healthcare providers, mental health practitioners, government, law enforcement, housing providers, and the larger community to support evidence-based solutions that help prevent homelessness and support homeless individuals in addressing their experiences of homelessness.

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 unsheltered 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 serves to support 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 voluntarily use HMIS due to 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 and 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 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. Field staff and volunteers asked all individuals appearing or known to be homeless during this period, "Where did you sleep this past Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>?" 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 a 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 extensively covered during the count to reach additional unsheltered homeless individuals.

## Hawai'i Island Summary

Table 5 summarizes sheltered, unsheltered, and total homelessness for Hawai'i Island since 2018. Individual and family homelessness is broken out within each component to highlight year-over-year differences between these key groups. Charts that identify trends in homelessness for Hawai'i Island can be viewed via the dashboard link in the Overview section. Please note that while an unsheltered count was not conducted in 2025, a sheltered count was conducted; therefore, we are able to make a year-to-year comparison of sheltered homelessness.

PIT data for Hawai'i Island show a 22-person decrease in total homelessness compared to 2024, a 3% reduction. Sheltered homelessness increased by 38 people, while unsheltered homelessness decreased by 60 people. The total number of homeless families was 33, eight fewer than in 2024. There were 28 sheltered families identified this year, two fewer than in 2024, yet six more than the 22 identified in 2025. Unsheltered family homelessness declined by six families to five in 2026.

**Table 5: Hawai'i Island Summary, 2018-2026**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>Sheltered</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>229</b>
Individuals	76	74	117	109	88	124	100	130	126
Fam Individuals	124	169	159	118	195	154	91	87	103
Adults	46	68	76	48	79	66	42	31	39
Children	78	101	83	70	116	88	49	56	64
Families	33	41	46	32	48	40	30	22	28
All Households	109	113	160	138	136	163	129	151	152
<b>Unsheltered</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>467</b>
Individuals	445	385	436	NA	496	670	493	NA	453
Fam Individuals	224	62	85	NA	58	55	34	NA	14
Adults	102	27	36	NA	25	25	16	NA	8
Children	122	35	49	NA	33	30	18	NA	6
Families	54	14	22	NA	18	15	11	NA	5
All Households	440	374	415	NA	483	661	492	NA	443
<b>Total</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>1,003</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>696</b>
Individuals	521	459	553	NA	584	794	593	NA	579
Fam Individuals	348	231	244	NA	253	209	125	NA	117
Adults	148	95	112	NA	104	91	58	NA	47
Children	200	136	132	NA	149	118	67	NA	70
Families	87	55	68	NA	66	55	41	NA	33
All Households	549	487	575	NA	619	824	621	NA	595

## Hawai'i Island Homeless Subpopulations

Hawai'i Island collected data on the subpopulations presented below in 2026. Table 6 highlights this data since 2018 and segments the sheltered data by emergency and transitional project type. Compared to 2024, overall results include reductions in the levels of chronically homeless individuals and families and declines in the number of adults with reported serious mental illness or chronic substance use issues.

**Table 6: Hawai'i Island Homeless Subpopulations, 2018-2026**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>									
Chronic Individuals	18	19	46	45	41	49	48	78	68
Chronic Families	3	6	7	5	3	0	1	1	4
Chronic Family Ind.	7	21	21	15	13	0	2	4	14
Vets	10	7	14	9	6	13	7	12	11
Vet Families	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vet Fam Ind.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Serious Mental Illness	37	28	65	55	47	73	51	110	69
Chronic Substance Use	25	21	42	36	41	60	42	79	59
HIV/AIDS	1	0	2	0	3	1	1	1	1
Fleeing DV	12	10	21	22	18	16	26	22	19
<b>Transitional Housing</b>									
Vets	2	1	3	3	2	1	1	0	0
Vet Families	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Vet Fam Ind.	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	0	0
Serious Mental Illness	11	14	18	14	17	11	4	0	0
Chronic Substance Use	6	13	9	7	15	10	7	0	0
HIV/AIDS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fleeing DV	8	11	7	7	8	5	2	3	4
<b>Unsheltered</b>									
Chronic Individuals	194	158	221	NA	240	269	288	NA	250
Chronic Families	6	3	6	NA	2	2	4	NA	0
Chronic Family Ind.	26	18	18	NA	6	8	11	NA	0
Vets	37	41	44	NA	35	36	30	NA	33
Vet Families	0	1	2	NA	0	1	1	NA	0
Vet Fam Ind.	0	3	6	NA	0	5	2	NA	0
Serious Mental Illness	204	165	228	NA	250	283	249	NA	209
Chronic Substance Use	132	112	131	NA	189	200	218	NA	181
HIV/AIDS	3	9	5	NA	9	8	2	NA	2
<b>Total by Subpopulation</b>									
Chronic Individuals	212	177	267	NA	281	318	336	NA	318
Chronic Families	9	9	13	NA	5	2	5	NA	4
Chronic Family Ind.	33	39	39	NA	19	8	13	NA	14
Vets	49	49	61	NA	43	50	38	NA	44
Vet Families	0	1	3	NA	0	1	1	NA	0
Vet Fam Ind.	0	3	11	NA	0	5	2	NA	0
Serious Mental Illness	252	207	311	NA	314	367	304	NA	278
Chronic Substance Use	163	146	182	NA	245	270	267	NA	240
HIV/AIDS	4	9	7	NA	12	9	3	NA	3

## Hawai'i Island Unsheltered Homelessness

Tables 7 and 8 present data on unsheltered homelessness on Hawai'i Island since 2018. Data conveys responses to the survey question “Where did you sleep the night of Sunday, Jan 25, 2026?” The nine unsheltered regions have remained consistent over the years presented, and the regional map is in Appendix 1. Table 7 highlights differences in total people, while Table 8 outlines differences in households. The total number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness declined by 11 percent over the two-year period, with the largest numerical decrease in the South Hilo region. Total households decreased by 49 compared to 2024, with large percentage declines in both family and individual households. The number of unsheltered families decreased by six households, or 88 percent. Over the years presented, there has been a continual reduction in the number of unsheltered families, with only five families remaining unsheltered as of the PIT.

**Table 7: Hawai'i Island Unsheltered Homeless Individuals by Region, 2018-2026**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>Individuals</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>453</b>
1: North Kohala	8	2	0	NA	0	3	1	NA	1
2: Hamakua	22	6	19	NA	6	21	13	NA	15
3: North Hilo	3	0	1	NA	16	2	2	NA	0
4: South Hilo	139	144	185	NA	244	301	252	NA	233
5: Puna	49	17	66	NA	35	63	59	NA	44
6: Ka`u	38	24	11	NA	13	9	8	NA	17
7: South Kona	13	16	1	NA	23	16	6	NA	0
8: North Kona	143	146	132	NA	145	232	138	NA	134
9: South Kohala	30	30	21	NA	14	23	14	NA	9
<b>Family Individuals</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>14</b>
1: North Kohala	0	0	0	NA	2	0	0	NA	0
2: Hamakua	4	0	0	NA	0	8	0	NA	0
3: North Hilo	0	0	3	NA	0	0	0	NA	0
4: South Hilo	29	11	21	NA	12	13	17	NA	4
5: Puna	39	18	14	NA	21	7	5	NA	5
6: Ka`u	95	17	15	NA	0	3	4	NA	2
7: South Kona	8	0	5	NA	0	5	0	NA	0
8: North Kona	31	4	27	NA	23	16	5	NA	3
9: South Kohala	18	12	0	NA	0	3	3	NA	0
<b>All Individuals</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>467</b>
1: North Kohala	8	2	0	NA	2	3	1	NA	1
2: Hamakua	26	6	19	NA	6	29	13	NA	15
3: North Hilo	3	0	4	NA	16	2	2	NA	0
4: South Hilo	168	155	206	NA	256	314	269	NA	237
5: Puna	88	35	80	NA	56	70	64	NA	49
6: Ka`u	133	41	26	NA	13	12	12	NA	19
7: South Kona	21	16	6	NA	23	21	6	NA	0
8: North Kona	174	150	159	NA	168	248	143	NA	137
9: South Kohala	48	42	21	NA	14	26	17	NA	9

**Table 8: Hawai'i Island Unsheltered Homeless Households by Region, 2018-2026**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>Ind. Households</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>438</b>
1: North Kohala	6	2	0	NA	0	3	1	NA	1
2: Hamakua	17	6	18	NA	6	21	13	NA	15
3: North Hilo	2	0	1	NA	16	2	2	NA	0
4: South Hilo	124	136	169	NA	229	290	245	NA	223
5: Puna	44	16	62	NA	33	60	59	NA	42
6: Ka`u	30	23	11	NA	12	9	8	NA	17
7: South Kona	9	13	1	NA	22	16	6	NA	0
8: North Kona	129	139	115	NA	134	223	133	NA	131
9: South Kohala	25	25	16	NA	13	22	14	NA	9
<b>Family Households</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>5</b>
1: North Kohala	0	0	0	NA	1	0	0	NA	0
2: Hamakua	1	0	0	NA	0	1	0	NA	0
3: North Hilo	0	0	1	NA	0	0	0	NA	0
4: South Hilo	8	3	6	NA	5	4	6	NA	1
5: Puna	9	3	5	NA	5	2	2	NA	2
6: Ka`u	23	4	3	NA	0	1	1	NA	1
7: South Kona	2	0	1	NA	0	1	0	NA	0
8: North Kona	7	1	6	NA	7	5	1	NA	1
9: South Kohala	4	3	0	NA	0	1	1	NA	0
<b>All Households</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>443</b>
1: North Kohala	6	2	0	NA	1	3	1	NA	1
2: Hamakua	18	6	18	NA	6	22	13	NA	15
3: North Hilo	2	0	2	NA	16	2	2	NA	0
4: South Hilo	132	139	175	NA	234	294	251	NA	224
5: Puna	53	19	67	NA	38	62	61	NA	44
6: Ka`u	53	27	14	NA	12	10	9	NA	18
7: South Kona	11	13	2	NA	22	17	6	NA	0
8: North Kona	136	140	121	NA	141	228	134	NA	132
9: South Kohala	29	28	16	NA	13	23	15	NA	9

## Hawai`i Island Additional Unsheltered Questions

In 2026, Hawai`i Island collected data on five additional questions through its unsheltered canvassing efforts. The following questions were included on the Single and Head of Household survey forms and were only administered on Hawai`i Island.

- *Did you move to Hawai`i within the past year?*
- *What led to your current living situation?*
- *Have you been arrested in the last year?*
- *How many times have you been to the emergency room in the past year?*
- *What can we do to help you end your homelessness?*

Table 9 presents response data from the question “*Did you Move to Hawai`i within the past year?*” Of the 443 households surveyed, 39 reported moving to Hawai`i within the past year. One family household responded “yes”, while the remaining 38 came from individual households. Tables 10 through 12 present data for households responding “yes” to this question.

**Table 9: Did you move to Hawai`i within the past year?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
Yes	1	38	39
No	4	381	385
Unknown/Refused		19	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>443</b>

**Table 10: If yes, what state or country did you come from?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
<b>State</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>
Alaska	1	3	4
Arizona		2	2
California		5	5
Florida		2	2
Georgia		1	1
Illinois		1	1
Indiana		1	1
Massachusetts		2	2
Michigan		1	1
Missouri		1	1
Nevada		2	2
New Jersey		1	1
New Mexico		1	1
New York		2	2
North Carolina		1	1
Oregon		2	2
Tennessee		1	1
Texas		3	3
Utah		1	1
Washington		3	3
Unknown State		1	1
<b>Foreign Country</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Micronesia		1	1
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>

Of the 39 households stating that they moved to Hawai'i within the past year, 38 came from states within the U.S., while one moved from a foreign country. Of the 38 state responses, most came from California. Ten of the 39 households (26%) that reported moving to Hawai'i within the past year indicated that they would be interested in returning home. This data is presented in Table 11.

**Table 11: If yes, are you interested in returning home?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
Yes		10	10
No	1	28	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>

For the 39 households that arrived within the last year, Table 12 displays data on why they moved to Hawai'i.

**Table 12: If yes, why did you come to Hawai'i?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
Came for work/trade living arrangement		5	5
Came for the weather	1	6	7
To be with family or friends and it didn't work out		14	14
Other reason		13	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>

Table 13 presents data from the survey question “*What led to your current living situation?*” This question allowed only one selection, intended to be the primary reason that each household was living unsheltered. Of the 443 households surveyed, all responded. Excluding the “Other reason” response, the top three most prevalent responses were family/relationship conflict, unable to afford rent, and disability. These three reasons accounted for 234 responses, or 53 percent of the total.

**Table 13: What was the primary reason that led to your current living situation?**

	Fam HH	Ind HH	Total	% of Total
COVID-19		9	9	2.0%
Disability (mental/addiction/physical)		47	47	10.6%
Evicted from my home	2	36	38	8.6%
Family/Relationship Conflict	1	122	123	27.8%
Fleeing from Domestic Violence		9	9	2.0%
Lost home due to fire		8	8	1.8%
Lost my job, unable to secure work		23	23	5.2%
Medical Emergency		9	9	2.0%
Natural Disaster		1	1	0.2%
Recently released from incarceration		5	5	1.1%
Unable to afford rent	1	63	64	14.4%
Unable to secure affordable housing	1	10	11	2.5%
Other reason		96	96	21.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 14 presents data from the question “*Have you been arrested in the last year?*” Of the 443 households surveyed, 107 reported being arrested in the past year. None of the families surveyed reported being arrested. Tables 15 and 16 present data for households responding that they had been arrested in the last year. Table 15 groups the response data into three categories because the survey form asked, “How many times?” Table 17 presents data from the survey question “*How many times have you been to the emergency room in the past year?*”

**Table 14: Have you been arrested in the last year?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
Yes		107	107
No	5	303	308
Unknown/Refused		28	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>443</b>

**Table 15: If yes, how many times?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
1 or 2 times		70	70
3 to 5 times		28	28
6 or more times		9	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>107</b>

**Table 16: If yes, how many days in the past year have you been in jail?**

	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
30 days or less		78	78
More than 30 days		29	29
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>107</b>

**Table 17: How many times have you been to the emergency room in the past year?**

Response	Fam HH	Individual HH	Total
None	4	245	249
1 or 2 times	1	140	141
3 to 5 times		29	29
More than 5 times		24	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>443</b>

Table 18 presents data from the survey question “*What can we do to help you end your homelessness?*” This question allowed for multiple response selections intended to convey data on what services can be provided to assist in resolving the household’s unsheltered homelessness. The percentage for each service line is based on a universe of 443 total households. “Securing housing” and “Money/Rent assistance” were the top two responses. Replacing lost or stolen documents ranked third, at just under 40 percent.

**Table 18: What can we do to help you end your homelessness?**

Service	Fam HH	Ind HH	Total	% of HHs
Childcare	0	1	1	0.2%
Documents (Replace lost/stolen)	1	175	176	39.7%
Employment	0	106	106	23.9%
Legal aid	0	16	16	3.6%
Medical Insurance	0	46	46	10.4%

Money/Rent assistance	3	195	198	44.7%
Need medical care	0	52	52	11.7%
Reconnect with family to go home	0	35	35	7.9%
Securing housing	5	281	286	64.6%
Treatment program	1	44	45	10.2%
Other reason	0	105	105	23.7%

## **Discussion of Results**

During the week of January 25, 2026, nearly a hundred volunteers moved through the darkness of Kona’s bushes, Hilo’s parks, and Puna’s rural backroads. They were looking for our neighbors experiencing unsheltered homelessness. What they found, and what the data now confirms, is a story of remarkable progress being held back by a single, systemic bottleneck, a housing market that is squeezing local households out of their neighborhoods, and pushing many more to the brink.

**We are effectively reducing the number of families experiencing homelessness on the streets of Hawai‘i Island.** Just two years ago, dozens of families with children were living in cars and tents. Today, through a coordinated "all-hands" approach, we have reduced the number of unsheltered family households by a staggering **91% since 2018**. Only five (5) unsheltered family households were identified. This serves as evidence that when we prioritize families with keiki and ensure they have access to shelter and housing, significant change is possible.

The 2026 PIT data continues to reinforce why reducing family homelessness remains one of Hawai‘i Island’s highest community priorities. Families with children often experience homelessness differently than single adults, frequently moving between vehicles, tents, or encampments while attempting to maintain employment, school attendance, and daily routines for their children. Homelessness during childhood can have significant long-term impacts on educational stability, physical and mental health, child development, and overall family well-being. The data reinforces the importance of continued community investment in family-centered interventions that prioritize the safety, stability, and long-term well-being of children and families across Hawai‘i Island.

We cannot ignore the **33 unsheltered veterans** who were experiencing homelessness during the count. This has remained relatively stable over the last several years. These individuals, who served in the United States military, are now navigating the trauma of the streets but deserve dignified, permanent, affordable housing.

### *More shelter options available*

The data shows our outreach teams are winning the trust of those living in the most precarious conditions. We saw an **11% drop in unsheltered homelessness**—that is, sixty (60) fewer individuals sleeping on the pavement or in the brush. Correspondingly, our sheltered population grew, as people moved off the streets and into temporary shelters. By opening a new overnight cot sleeping shelter, the Salvation Army at the Hilo Temple Corps Community Center increased our community’s shelter inventory by fifty (50) new beds.

## *Longer Shelter Stays as Residents Struggle to Find Housing they can Afford*

Although the increase in shelter beds provides much-needed temporary respite for our unsheltered neighbors, the data reveal a secondary, more frustrating crisis. While service providers are efficiently assisting our neighbors in accessing shelters, an increasing number have nowhere to go next. Long-term stays in shelters remain high.

Some emergency shelter programs are now experiencing average stays exceeding one year, with certain projects reporting lengths of stay ballooning to **480 days**. An emergency shelter is designed to be a 90-day pit stop; instead, it has become a year-and-a-half-long waiting room. This Point in Time Count shows 696 people experiencing homelessness, and many are "stuck" because Hawai'i Island simply lacks the permanent, affordable housing inventory that is truly accessible to the people we serve. We are successfully opening the front door (shelter), but for many, the back door (permanent housing) is locked.

Compounding the issue, **51% of our neighbors experiencing homelessness** are struggling with "chronic" homelessness—long-term displacement compounded by physical or behavioral health disabilities

Many individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are navigating far more than a temporary housing crisis. Long-term homelessness is frequently compounded by serious mental illness, substance use disorders, chronic medical conditions, trauma histories, and repeated experiences of instability or institutionalization. Outreach and engagement with chronically homeless individuals often requires months or even years of relationship-building, trust-building, and highly individualized support before many individuals are able to consistently engage with services or maintain long-term housing stability. Without sufficient permanent supportive housing, behavioral healthcare access, intensive case management, and long-term stabilization services, many individuals remain trapped, cycling between streets, shelter, hospitals, and temporary interventions without achieving lasting housing stability. Despite these challenges, providers across Hawai'i Island continue working collaboratively to engage and stabilize highly vulnerable individuals.

The 2026 PIT Count demonstrates that when we work together collaboratively, housing-focused, and coordinated, our non-profit service providers and the County are investing in the right interventions and strategies. The 3% overall reduction in homelessness in the face of a brutal housing market is a testament to their grit.

In addition to the Point in Time Count, service providers administer programs and track outcomes as a program and as part of a community system through a shared database, Bridging the Gap's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Data from 2025 measuring the performance of Hawai'i County's service providers reflects success: 74% of people exiting Hawai'i Island homeless programs moved into permanent housing, and that 93% of those who moved into permanent housing remained housed for at least 2 years ([Bridging the Gap, Metrics That Matter, Hawai'i Island, 2025](#)). Despite inadequate program funding that has not kept pace with inflation or with the number of people in need of services, both those data points exceed state averages.

## *What Homeless Services Providers Cannot Control*

While Hawai'i County service providers' program success metrics are encouraging, programs alone will not get us out of the housing crisis. In the past year, for every person service providers housed, two more entered homelessness, many for the first time. A United States government statistical analysis found that for every \$100 increase in rent, there is a 9% increase in homelessness. ([U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2020](#)). In 2025, fair market rent for a modest 2-bedroom apartment in Hawai'i County was \$2,075 ([National Low Income Housing Coalition: Out of Reach Report, 2025](#)). To turn these protracted shelter stays into an efficient system that quickly moves people from shelter to dignified housing, we need policy change to provide upstream solutions, especially regulations on the housing market to ensure that local people earning local wages can afford to live in their own communities. These may include incentives for landlords to rent affordable units to local residents, disincentives for investors who remove homes from the local market, rent stabilization, investment into remediating and reintegrating vacant and abandoned properties into the housing market, and an investment in permanent supportive housing, housing for those who are unable to work, and extremely low-income housing inventory that will remain affordable in perpetuity.

The data is clear: Service providers know how to end homelessness, but only the government can control the housing market.

### **Looking Ahead:**

**The Future of Data:** Hawai'i County is prioritizing the full implementation of a localized Hawai'i County Homeless Management Information System (CHMIS) for its grantees and transitioning from its Streak - Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for Gmail system. This new integrated platform will bridge a collaboration gap between HMIS and non-HMIS providers. By standardizing data across the island, the system will connect our unhoused neighbors to shelter and housing programs, reduce service duplication, and provide transparent performance metrics. This approach aims to accelerate the path to permanent housing for all.

**Infrastructure Expansion: Residential Acquisitions:** A major milestone was the strategic purchase of residential units, completed in **September 2025**, funded through Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) allocations. These units are currently undergoing final preparations for **full implementation in mid-2026**, which will immediately increase the number of permanent housing beds across Hawai'i Island. By transitioning from temporary subsidies to the ownership of permanent housing assets, the County is securing long-term inventory that ensures households have access to housing they can afford. This model transforms one-time federal funding into a lasting community resource that will serve the island's most vulnerable residents for years to come.

**Kukuioia Assessment Center and Emergency Shelter:** Construction in North Kona remains on track for an early 2027 opening, with vertical construction of the 16 emergency units and the central assessment hub currently underway. This facility represents a cornerstone of the County's infrastructure strategy, providing not only immediate shelter but also dedicated space for case management and a safe parking program. By centralizing services at this assessment center, the

County will streamline the transition from the streets to stable housing, directly supporting our goal of a real-time, coordinated response across Hawaii Island.

## **COMMUNITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS**

Community Alliance Partners (CAP), the Hawaii County chapter of 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 supply of housing — especially deeply affordable housing for those whose incomes fall at or below 30% of the Area Median Income. CAP 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 can 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, including housing identification, time-limited financial assistance, and housing-based case management services. In addition to shallow subsidies like Rapid Re-Housing, it is critical that long-term rental subsidy programs 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. EXPAND AND ENHANCE STREET OUTREACH - COORDINATED RESPONSE**  
Individuals experiencing homelessness have significantly decreased life expectancies and are at greater risk of exposure to a variety of infectious diseases. Therefore, coordinated,

consistent outreach to those who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness is essential for creating the trusting relationships necessary to connect individuals to the resources that can help them end their period of homelessness. Providing "street medicine" alongside outreach is critical to the well-being of those experiencing homelessness, as well as reducing the cost incurred through emergency service usage. Street medicine teams can assess, treat, and educate patients in need of medical assistance, and provide follow-up evaluation and care as needed, in their own environment. When addressing homelessness, street medicine programs can be an essential first step for an individual in obtaining higher levels of medical, mental health, and social care that can provide a pathway to securing housing and long-term stability.